The Politics of Epithets in the American Revolution, 1763-87

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that I have submitted, or is being concurrently submitted, for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

This thesis is 79,358 words in length and does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History Degree Committee.

Abstract

This study considers the politics of epithets from the start of the imperial crisis in 1763 until the Constitutional Convention in 1787. More than mere insults, epithets were defined in this period as appellations or titles and were used to describe a person's qualities or attributes. Despite the importance of these identity terms as the ideals that people most valued in their neighbours, early Americanists do not centre epithets. Historians focus on individual terms – "whig," "American," and "republican" – but these labels have not been brought together into a conceptual history of epithets. When these terms are examined together, this thesis argues that the partisans, the opponents of British rule, invented many of the words to discuss who they were, build bonds of belonging amongst their supporters, and identify their internal and external enemies in the Revolutionary period. In attempting to form a sense of themselves and others in the midst of such a divisive event, the partisans transformed the terms of their British colonial past, labels that emerged over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the colonists started to envision themselves as distinctive but equal to Britain, and reformed them into epithets that they used to demonstrate the virtues of the United States of America, and determine the ideals that inhabitants were meant to live by in a new nation.

This process was far from uncontested though. Rather than emerging separately, the partisans developed their epithets in conversation and opposition to several rival terms that emerged in a war over words with their enemies, including Britons in the metropole, a significant number of native peoples in the Ohio river valley, and persons disaffected to the cause in Virginia. Since the partisans invented these terms in such a conflicted environment, they argued that only those people who showed merit were worthy of using epithets. The politics of epithets was the politics of merit. Since merit was a contested concept, America and Britain's inhabitants struggled over who merited epithets and constantly changed the guidelines over who deserved to use these terms. This contest over words had Janus-faced outcomes. It allowed the "people out of doors," including poorer whites, women, and black persons, to claim rights and belonging as meritorious "citizens." Yet the political elites, those "within doors," who were instrumental in manufacturing these fighting words, ensured that only the chosen few, especially white men, could call themselves "Americans." The origins of much social inequality, over who had the same status, in the early United States was therefore partly born from a seemingly egalitarian ideal: a society where epithets were only given to those who deserved them.

Acknowledgments

Completing a dissertation at Cambridge has been a privilege. There are so many people to thank for making this journey possible. There have been trials and tribulations along the way – and you might be able to guess some of them by reading the thesis. But my mentors, friends, and loved ones – in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – have been a constant source of support, have immeasurably shaped this project, and made the last three and a half years unforgettable.

To my supervisor, Dr Sarah Pearsall: my debts are endless. Sarah has gone above and beyond the call of duty so many times. She has read my (often mediocre) chapter drafts. She encouraged me when I was on the right track. She put me on the straight and narrow when I derailed (often spectacularly). She has (literally) written references at all hours of the day and night. She contacted numerous colleges to get me supervising experience. She gave me my first taste of lecturing. She invited me to dinners with some of the smartest people I will ever meet. She emailed me book recommendations, journal articles, or website links that were related to my topic. And she has believed in this project and me even when I had lost all hope in both. Thank you, Sarah!

To my advisor, Dr Nick Guyatt: thank you, thank you, and thank you again. Nick came in like a tornado (or a wrecking ball) at the end of my first year to challenge the direction of my thesis up to that point. Without him, the British perspective in the dissertation would be non-existent, the geography still undefined, and the thesis questions would probably still look as if someone wrote them on acid (all despite Sarah's best efforts to put me on the straight and narrow). But that was not the end of Nick's influence. Like a mosquito, I have buzzed around Nick for the last three years – sending him numerous requests for references even though he would have been justified in blocking his email.

Like Sarah and Nick, my debts to my former supervisor at the University of Sydney, Professor Michael McDonnell, could also fill a page. I would not be an early Americanist without Mike. I came to his office as a bungling twenty-two-year-old and left as a bungling twenty-three-year-old who had just completed an Honours dissertation on the loyalists. But, in the process, Mike completely reenergised my interest in history. Though I feared he would write me off the Christmas card list when I told him that I was turning, however tentatively, to the dark arts of intellectual history, he was always willing to debate ideas over a beer and

provide advice. Like so many other PhD students, I cannot thank him enough for what he has done for me.

I am also indebted to the senior academics who, whilst not playing a direct role in the dissertation, have provided much-needed assistance or have sat and listened to my questions and complaints. The part of the fourth chapter which deals with British memories of the American Revolution had its genesis in Dr Marco Duranti's Honours seminar on Modern European history over five years ago. I also want to thank Professor Chris Hilliard. I still have most of the handouts and notes from his "Becoming a Historian" seminar. Most of what I know about the ins and outs of academia – or at the least the part that makes any sense – is owed to Chris's instruction. At Cambridge, Dr Bronwen Everill, Dr Seth Archer, Professor Gary Gerstle, and Professor Andrew Preston have made me feel welcome from the beginning. Seth, in particular, gave me the opportunity to commentate and present at the American History Workshop. As he has done for so many other Americanists, both early and modern, he also spent time after class asking me questions about the project and recommending new books to read. I was also lucky to meet Professor David Hsiung at the David Library in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania. Dave drove me to the supermarket for food, patiently listened over pizza and BBQ as I droned on about my research, and he was the perfect companion as we battled over microfilm and illegible handwriting in the library.

This thesis would also not be possible without the universities and archives who assisted me in researching this project and the brilliant (and patient) archivists who make the work of historians possible. I am grateful to the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, the David Library of the American Revolution, and the International Centre for Jefferson Studies at Monticello for the fellowships that they so generously provided so that I could visit the United States. I am also thankful for the assistance of the following institutions: the Liverpool Record Office, and National Archives in the United Kingdom; the Newberry Library in Chicago; the American Philosophical Library, and Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia; the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College; the John D. Rockefeller Library at Colonial Williamsburg; the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg; and the Library of Virginia in Richmond. The University of Sydney also provided much needed financial assistance so I could come to Cambridge in the first place. The Cambridge History Faculty and Gonville and Caius College have also been swift at dealing with my constant applications for funds. I am particularly thankful to my graduate tutor, Dr Ruth Scurr, for her tireless efforts on my behalf and to the entire History Faculty administration staff, particularly Mike Weaver and

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My academic debts are numerous, but my personal ones are even more so. The process of writing and researching the dissertation would have been impoverished without the families who gave a weird and wacky Australian much needed food, conversation, and shelter. Tired after long days reading about dead people, it was great to be amongst the living. Through one of my dad's old friends, Simon Ford, I was lucky to meet Cal and George Jennison in Richmond. They were so kind to me over the course of my two weeks in Virginia's capital, inviting me to a number of family dinners, including one where I got the chance to meet a history teacher from a local school. I cannot thank them enough for the generosity they showed almost a complete stranger. Much closer to my home base in Cambridge, I had a lot of fun staying with Julia, Simon, and Alfie Channing in London whilst trawling through the National Archives. Though the Archives are grey and look like a bunker, it was nice to return to more colourful surroundings and talk about Brazilian football, enjoy great company, and watch Alfie steadily munch his way through all the tomatoes in the garden. My thanks to Laura Channing, who has been a great friend from my very first week in Cambridge, for helping to organise everything.

I am particularly blessed to have such amazing friends. Whether near or far, they have been an incredible source of joy and support. Besides being away from my parents, the hardest thing about leaving Australia was repeatedly saying goodbye to close friends. Henry Duff, Sarah Robson, and Matt Ivshenko have been with me before the dissertation was even a twinkle in my eye. They have kept the beers on ice and repeatedly done me the best favour of all: not mentioning history! I also miss the friends that I made at the University of Sydney. The Honours beach and brunch club: Ruya Ahmed, Cameron Allan, Huw Calford, Frey Dellagiacoma, Samantha Sing Key, Emma Kluge, Thomas Pierce, Eleanor Russell, and Shayma Taweel. And the brilliant PhD'ers: Sarah Dunstan, Hollie Pich, Ben Vine, and Marama Whyte. The friendships I have made at Cambridge are particularly special. The students are what makes college life special, and the people I have met at Caius have made graduate life all that I had hoped for and more. From Saturday nights at Spoons to World Cup football to drink-filled games of Monopoly (yep, there was a lot of drinking at college), I have had the best of times with the Caius clan. To those still here and to those who have left, I want to thank Audrey Artignan, Lander Bosch, Pete Budden, Sam Brockie, Nik Cox, Ivo Dawkins, Amelia Drew, Dan Hong, Sarah Mitchell, Martin Potts, Helen Rampton, and Kieran Weldon. I also want to thank the best housemates a guy could possibly ask for: Anna Knack and George Backhouse.

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My debts to my mum and dad are the greatest of all. Leaving them in Australia to head for the UK was the hardest decision I have made. I have returned periodically, but it has been difficult not being around to see them and enjoy wide-ranging conversations with dad about politics and the world, trips to Coogee Beach, and long walks with mum. They are my best friends and teammates – my rock of support in a graduate life which is filled with insecurities and uncertainty. I said a lot of faff in my undergraduate dissertation, but in the acknowledgments section I said that 'none of this would be possible without my parents. They have read over my drafts, kept me smiling, and been a source of inspiration every day.' After almost five years, lots of books read, many extra-strong coffees (and pints of Guinness) consumed, and many thousands of miles travelled, that statement has never been truer. Some

things change, but their love and support has thankfully remained exactly the same. This thesis is for them.

Alongside my wonderful parents, this thesis is also dedicated to a special person who is not with us. My aunt, Margarita England, passed away almost four months before I submitted this dissertation. The loss of such a kind, funny, and generous person has shaken the family to its core. I miss her every day. I can only say that an entire thesis about insults and epithets would have probably suited her sense of humour. So, this dissertation is also for you, Margarita, with love from “your boy.”

Table of Figures

Table of Contents

Introduction

This dissertation argues that, in the process of trying to determine friends from enemies, the partisans – the opponents of British rule in North America – invented the words to discuss who they were, build bonds of belonging based on these principles, and denounce their enemies in the Revolutionary period. It explores how identity terms, known as epithets, were made and remade as two societies, Virginia and Great Britain, were cast into turmoil by crisis, war, and revolution. It tells the story of how the partisans' efforts to shape these labels resulted in a war over words as their enemies, whether at home in America or abroad in Britain, attacked the former colonists' attempts to revitalise, radicalise, reform, and reconstruct epithets from the imperial crisis in 1763 until the Constitutional Convention in 1787. In attempting to define and redefine who deserved to use these epithets, this thesis concludes that the partisans developed a new notion of who belonged in the United States of America – a new culture of belonging that partly supplanted the ideal of birthright subjecthood in the British Empire.[1] They argued that people could only belong in the new nation if they *merited* the privilege.

One incident helps to show how the politics of epithets carried great importance and caused significant conflict in the Revolution. In an early draft of the Declaration of Independence, the Virginian congressman Thomas Jefferson referred to the colonists as his 'fellow subjects'.[2] With the ink still wet, he used his hand to erase 'fellow subjects', replacing it with 'fellow citizens'.[3] The hand of a Virginian slaveholder juxtaposed "British subjects," shackled to the 'political bands' of a tyrannical king, with America's "citizens" defending their natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.[4] This was a radical act of name-calling. In the British Empire "subject" and "citizen" were virtually synonymous terms that denoted one's status in a transnational community where the ruling monarch protected a supplicant's rights in exchange for loyalty.[5] However, after their numerous petitions to George

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1 This study understands words and their changing meanings as a symptom of larger shifts in political culture (the set of shared views and normative judgments held by a population). See Eric Nelson, 'What Kind of Book is *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*', *New England Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (March 2018), pp. 147-171.

2 Lauren Sausser, 'Thomas Jefferson made slip in Declaration of Independence', *Associated Press*, 3 July 2010, <http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/07/thomas_jefferson_made_slip_in.html>, accessed 14 May 2018.

3 *Ibid*.

4 'Declaration of Independence: A Transcription, 4 July 1776', *National Archives*, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>, accessed 15 May 2018.

5 Hannah Weiss Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign: Bonds of Belonging in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 4.

III failed, the supporters of independence cast aside their subjecthood. Still, the distinction between "subjects" and "citizens" mattered to more people than Jefferson. In fact, the Virginian may have corrected his terminology in the draft declaration with the objections of others in mind. The English firebrand Thomas Paine detested the colonists' attachment to subjecthood. In his popular pamphlet *Common Sense*, written six months earlier, Paine had declared that 'Under our present denomination of British subjects we can neither be received nor heard abroad: the custom of all Courts is against us, and will be so, until by an independence we take rank with other nations.'[6] A group of Virginian petitioners similarly encouraged their delegates to change the terms that defined America's legal status at Virginia's constitutional convention on 13 May 1776. '[W]hen the contest is between subject and subject, with the established power of peace and war at the head of our enemies', they protested, 'we have not the least room to believe that any foreign nation will espouse our cause in an open and avowed manner'.[7] These distinctions had international legal implications. Without the French and Spanish empires as their allies, Paine and the Virginian petitioners argued, the "Glorious Cause" of America would be lost.[8]

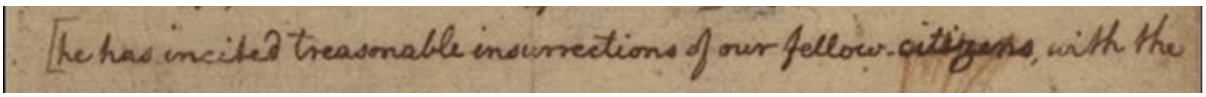

Figure 1: The line in Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration where the mistake occurred. One can see the smudge where he replaced the term "subjects" with "citizens." Source: Library of Congress.

A few historians have acknowledged Jefferson's shift in terms. Robert G. Parkinson attributes his mistake to the fact that Congress only had '18 days to craft a polished statement of purpose for the American Revolution that would explain the conflict and make it legitimate and acceptable for foreign and domestic audiences alike.'[9] True enough. Yet Parkinson's

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6 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, On the following interesting Subjects*, 10 January 1776, in Eric Foner, ed., *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), p. 46. Paine scholars have not noticed his comments on subjecthood. See Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, '"The 'Divine Right of Republics": Hebraic Republicanism and the Debate over Kingless Government in Revolutionary America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (July 2009), pp. 535-564; and Robert A. Ferguson, 'The Commonalities of Common Sense', *William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (July 2000), pp. 465-504.

7 Instructions of Buckingham County Freeholders to Delegates Charles Patterson and John Cabell, 13 May 1776, in Robert L. Scribner and Brent Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence*, vol. 7 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973-1983), pp. 111-112.

8 Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

9 Robert G. Parkinson, 'The Declaration of Independence', in Francis D. Cogliano, ed., *A Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), p. 47. Parkinson is not the only scholar of the

omission of the context surrounding the term "subject" is suggestive. There is a discrepancy between the importance Jefferson's contemporaries afforded epithets, and their omission from histories of the American Revolutionary period. The efforts of contemporaries to reconstitute these important political terms and their notions of belonging in a crisis, war, and revolution cannot be explained without a focus on these epithets.

"Patriot," "republican," "whig," "American," and "loyalist." Why did people during the American Revolution use these and other epithets? What were the contemporary meanings of these terms? How did their definitions change, and why? And, most importantly, what do these words suggest about the nature of that struggle? More than mere insults, epithets were defined in the eighteenth century as titles or appellations which denoted a person's qualities or attributes.[10] Since *identity* is a complicated and overused term that only became popular in the mid-twentieth century, this thesis will instead focus on *identification*: the epithets which signified the ideals – the standards and social values – that people most valued or opposed in their neighbours.[11] This study's focus on identification has three advantages. First, whilst epithets fall under the umbrella of keywords (words and concepts of significance), the former terms were unique in that they were inherently linked to the politics of naming: the act of labelling individuals, groups, ethnicities, and events and the power relations that involves. The literature on keywords has shed light on these issues of naming, with Daniel T. Rodgers arguing that individuals were born into languages they did not invent themselves.[12] This challenge of reinventing words with British origins was a significant component of the politics of language in the Revolution too. (Indeed, this dissertation builds on historical work – by Alison LaCroix,

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Declaration of Independence to miss the importance of the distinction between "subject" and "citizen." See also David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).

[10] 'Epithet', *Oxford English Dictionary*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63605?rskey=1Da1mg&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>, accessed 2 October 2018.

[11] Philip Gleason, 'Identifying Identity: A Semantic History', *Journal of American History* 69, no. 4 (March 1983), pp. 910-931. The literature on identity as a methodology is comprehensive, but see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2016 [1983]); and Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond Identity', *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000), pp. 1-47. For epithets as ideals and social values, see Peter N. Moogk, '"Thieving Buggers" and "Stupid Sluts: Insults and Popular Culture in New France', *William and Mary Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (October 1979), pp. 524-547; and Mary Beth Norton, 'Gender and Defamation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland', *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (January 1987), pp. 3-39.

[12] For studies that have focused on keywords, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983 [1976]); and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). The debate concerning Rodgers's *Contested Truths* is particularly helpful. See Mark Olsen and Louis-Georges Harvey, 'Contested Methods: Daniel T. Rodgers's Contested Truth', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (October 1988), pp. 653-688; and Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Keywords: A Reply', *Ibid*., pp. 669-676.

Max Edling, Eliga Gould, Cathy Matson, and Peter Onuf – that has highlighted the unexceptional nature of the United States, particularly how the terms and concepts used in this period had roots in Britain, and how the partisans wanted to remake the nation in Europe's image.)[13] But Rodgers – in a study that focused primarily on white men – underestimates the race, class, and gendered dimensions of who could use these words and for what purpose. The practice of labelling was widespread, yet it took place under constraints that were negotiated and contested. Second, an emphasis on *identification* allows epithets, which were just one way that people identified themselves, to be brought into a larger conversation with the historical literatures on clothing, material culture, and performance – all of which helped contemporaries express their sense of self.[14] Finally, rather than focus on one epithet, like "American" or "Briton," this thesis shows that there were a diverse number of dynamic terms that helped people understand who they were, whose side they were on, and denounce their opponents.

The struggle to determine who deserved these terms started a war over words. This war over epithets took place in this particular moment for a reason. The American Revolution was a violent break between the thirteen colonies and Britain that forced the former colonists to reconsider who they were, how they referred to their enemies, and what they stood for. But the late eighteenth century was also a moment of linguistic fracturing when the very meaning of words, epithets, and political terminology was in flux. Instead of the Revolution changing the concept of identity, as Dror Wahrman argues, from a position of stable categories of "us" and "them" to instability, this event took place in a wider context where the meaning of words was contested.[15] Edward G. Gray has shown that, by the late seventeenth century, European theorists had started to challenge the late-medieval idea that words had innate, immutable,

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[13] Alison L. LaCroix is particularly explicit on how the concept "federalism," the combination of general governments with regional authorities, originated in the British Empire. See *The Ideological Origins of American Federalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). For the United States as remade in Europe's image, see Max Edling, 'Peace Pact and Nation: An International Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States', *Past and Present* 240, no. 1 (August 2018), pp. 267-303; Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth*; and *idem*., Cathy D. Matson and Peter S. Onuf, *A Union of Interests: Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990).

[14] For the different ways that people identified themselves in early America, see Joan R. Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006 [1996]), p. 168; and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 5. Ann M. Little has shown the importance of clothing to a person's sense of self in a period before an innate sense of identity. ('"Shoot That Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!": Cultural Cross-Dressing on the New England Frontier, 1620-1760', *New England Quarterly* 74, no. 2 [June 2001], pp. 238-273.)

[15] For the view that the Revolution was responsible for these changes in identity, see Dror Wahrman, 'The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution', *American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (October 2001), pp. 1236-1262; and *idem*., *Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

transhistorical meanings sent down by God.[16] The definition of words, the English philosopher John Locke argued in 1689, was instead decided by 'tacit consent'.[17] Human beings, Locke argued, not God, established the connection between words and things. This finding led to a renewed attempt by a number of subsequent thinkers, including the English lexicographer Samuel Johnson, to establish what specific words meant and stop language being misused for what he thought of as political benefit.[18] The politics of epithets and titles thus became a critical issue as contemporaries became divided over what particular appellations meant and who deserved to use them. In the words of one Virginian poet, 'no man' deserved an epithet or title 'until he has done something to merit it.'[19]

Despite their importance, and the wider battles over language at this time, epithets have not been centred in the Revolutionary historiography. Early Americanists have undertaken important studies of individual terms – including Bernard Bailyn on "whig," Jane Kamensky on "American," and Douglas Bradburn on "citizen" – but no one has brought these terms together into one cohesive study.[20] Through an inclusive conceptual history, which examines the perspectives of both Britain and Virginia's inhabitants – women and men, black and white, indigenous and European – this thesis will reorient scholarly discussion of the themes of allegiances, identity, and belonging in the Revolutionary era.[21]

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16 Edward G. Gray, *New World Babel: Languages and Nations in Early America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 3. For more on the Enlightenment in America, see Caroline Winterer, *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

17 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1689]), p. 408. Locke's thinking on language is explicated in Walter R. Ott, *Locke's Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

18 For the attempts of European thinkers to purify language in Britain and America, see Thomas Gustafson, *Representative Words: Politics, Literature, and the American Language, 1776-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); John Howe, *Language and Political Meaning in Revolutionary America* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); and Peter Martin, *The Dictionary Wars: The American Fight over the English Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). For these attempts elsewhere, see Sophia Rosenfeld, *A Revolution in Language: The Problem of Signs in Late Eighteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

19 "Caledoniensis", in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 30 March 1769. For this poet, see Richard Beale Davis, 'James Reid, Colonial Virginia Poet and Moral and Religious Essayist', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 79, no. 1 (January 1971), pp. 3-19.

20 Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Jane Kamensky, *A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016); and Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

21 For examples of recent conceptual histories, which combine elements of social, cultural, and intellectual history, see Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); and Craig Bruce Smith, *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation's Ideals during the Revolutionary Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018). The call for a more inclusive conceptual history, although in a European context, can be found in Jan-Werner Müller, 'On Conceptual History', in Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn, eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 74-93.

Terminology

In centering epithets, this study recasts the terms of convenience – "patriot," "loyalist," "whig," and "tory" – that scholars use to describe allegiances in this period. The problem is that the historians using these terms have taken for granted the notion that one side of combatants can be described as "patriots" and the other as "loyalists," even though these terms were often bitterly contested in a war over words that lasted the entire conflict. These terms are used in synthetic histories, with Alan Taylor referring to 'Patriot forces' and the 'Patriot cause' against the 'loyalist militia' and 'loyalist leaders'.[22] These concepts are also present in intellectual histories, with Eric Nelson calling one group the 'patriot Royalists'.[23] These identity terms are featured in social histories, with Michael A. McDonnell examining Virginia's 'patriot leaders' and 'patriot movement' mobilising for their war against Great Britain.[24] These epithets are even utilised in historical approaches that are more attentive to the politics of history. They are featured in imperial and transatlantic histories (which have sought to go "beyond the nation"), with the title of Maya Jasanoff's recent work on the sixty thousand persons who fled America after the war referring to *American Loyalists in a Revolutionary World*.[25] And these terms are also included in histories of memory, with Sarah J. Purcell distinguishing the 'patriots' and 'Loyalists'.[26] Far from exceptional, though, these prominent scholars are emblematic of a wider inattention to the terms and concepts that populate our histories. But why focus on particular epithets, such as "patriot," "loyalist," "whig," and "tory," and not others? "Friends of government," "rifleman," and "refugee" were prominent throughout this period and yet they

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[22] Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (New York: Norton, 2016), p. 91 ('forces'), 97 ('cause'), and 126 ('militia' and 'leaders').

[23] Eric Nelson, *The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 8.

[24] Michael A. McDonnell, *The Politics of War: Race, Class, and Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 51. For another example of a history that use these terms, see Judith Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

[25] Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: First Vintage Books, 2012), p. 357. For other recent imperial and transnational histories who use these labels, see Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, eds., *The Loyal Atlantic: Remaking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era* (Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Jonathan Israel, *The Expanding Blaze: How the American Revolution Ignited the World, 1775-1848* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017); and Matthew Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again: How the American Revolution Devastated the Globe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). The ambitions of international history to go "beyond the nation" as a historical category can be found in Ian Tyrrell, 'American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History', *American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 1991), pp. 1031-1055; and Sebouh David Aslanian et al, 'AHR *Conversation* How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History', *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 2013), pp. 1431-1472.

[26] Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 12 ('patriots') and 16 ('loyalists').

receive little or no historical attention. When "Friends of Government" is mentioned, for instance, it is introduced as an instance of, what Jane Kamensky calls, a 'black-and-white schema, which poorly fit Boston's many shades of gray.'[27] This thesis will build on these histories and show that the terms which have dominated our narratives were merely a selection from the colourful vocabulary of epithets that were available to contemporaries.

Beyond their politicised nature, the historical usage of epithets as terms of convenience obscures as much as it reveals. "Patriot" is one of these epithets. This term may be the most overused word in the Revolutionary historiography. Almost none of this scholarship has drawn on the work of British historians, including David Armitage and Linda Colley, who have recognised the importance of the language of "patriotism" in the eighteenth century.[28] The "patriot" or "lover of one's country," these scholars have shown, was expected to be a supporter of the British constitution, virtuous, and an opponent of party-politics. Since early Americanists have largely ignored British definitions of "patriotism," two further problems have become evident. The first is that early Americanists, most notably T. H. Breen and Sarah J. Purcell, have conflated nationalism and "patriotism." These scholars have understood both as synonymous despite such a reading of American nationalism only being possible in the early republic.[29] 'In a sense', Sarah Purcell writes, 'the future memory of heroic sacrifice actually came to define patriotism…The content of early American nationalism was a reverence for sacrifice itself.'[30] Reading modern understandings of "patriotism" back into the late eighteenth century risks treating ideas as transhistorical and not culturally specific. It is therefore essential that "patriotism" be understood on its own terms and in its proper context. The second problem is that by applying the term "patriot" to the partisans, and not their disaffected enemies,

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27 Kamensky, *Revolution in Color*, p. 136.

28 For "patriotism," see David Armitage, 'A Patriot for Whom? The Afterlives of Bolingbroke's Patriot King', *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 4 (October 1997), pp. 397-418; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005 [1992]); David Eastwood, 'Robert Southey and the Meanings of Patriotism', *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 3 (July 1992), pp. 265-287; Eliga H. Gould, 'American Independence and Britain's Counter-Revolution', *Past & Present* 154 (February 1997), pp. 107-141; Hugh Cunningham, 'The language of patriotism', in Raphael Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 1: History and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 57-89; and Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ch. 5.

29 For research on the meaning of "patriotism" in the thirteen colonies and United States, see Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*; T. H. Breen, 'Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising', *Journal of American History* 84, no. 1 (June 1997), pp. 13-39; and Mary G. Dietz, 'Patriotism', in Terence Ball et al, eds., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 177-193. For the relationship between nationalism and "patriotism" in the early republic, see Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)

30 Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, p. 19.

historians have bought into the victor's history.[31] Those partisans fighting against Britain at the time, and historians writing in the immediate post-war period, such as the South Carolina congressman David Ramsay and the Massachusetts-born writer Mercy Otis Warren, hoped that "Americans" at home and interested observers abroad would label them as "patriots." In reality, disaffected persons and their British allies violently opposed the partisans' attempts to appropriate "patriotism" and use it for their own political ends. To apply this term to the partisans, therefore, risks giving the Continental Congress and its supporters a key victory in the war over words.

In the historiography "loyalist" has had similar issues to "patriot." First, the term has not been understood in its proper context. In fact, the fourth chapter in this dissertation examines the emergence of the epithet "loyalist," at the very end of the conflict when the disaffected were appealing to Britain for compensation. "Loyalist," then, was part of a wider attempt to frame the Revolutionary narrative and signal the virtue of disaffected persons who had been forced to flee America because of their armed opposition to the United States. Secondly, "loyalist" has been misused as an ideological term denoting a set of inhabitants who believed in "loyalism." In this school of thought, Edward Larkin argues that historians need to 'understand loyalist motivations or thinking.'[32] Rather than empty the term of 'conceptual meaning', Larkin argues, the 'loyalists opposed the Revolution not only because they cherished their historical, commercial, and affective links to the British Empire but also because they objected to the cost it exacted on their communities.'[33] Larkin's approach to "loyalism" needs to be placed in conversation with the new scholarship on subjecthood, which notes that loyalty *was* an affective stance.[34] Loyalty was an affective posture that allowed one to petition a monarch or his ministers for a redress of grievances. Following the end of the Seven Years'

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31 Dietz, 'Patriotism', p. 187.

32 Edward Larkin, 'What is a Loyalist? The American Revolution as civil war', *Common-Place* 8, no. 1 (October 2007).

33 *Ibid*. Examples of a similar historical usage of "loyalist" can be found in Kimberly Nath, 'Loyalism, Citizenship, and Identity: The Shoemaker Family', in Patrick Spero and Michael Zuckerman, eds., *The American Revolution Reborn* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 29-43; Ruma Chopra, *Unnatural Rebellions: Loyalists in New York City during the Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); and Donald F. Johnson, 'Ambiguous Allegiances: Urban Loyalties during the American Revolution', *Journal of American History* 104, no. 3 (December 2017), pp. 610-631. For a "loyalist" ideology, see Janice Potter-McKinnon, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

34 For the new literature on subjecthood, see Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*; and Marcella Echeverri, *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780-1825* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). This growth in interest in subjecthood has been accompanied by a surge in historical interest in royalism. See Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Nelson, *Royalist Revolution*.

War between Britain and France in 1763, Hannah Weiss Muller argues that the language of subjecthood, which helped bind subjects and their sovereign, was the glue that held the British Empire together. And subjecthood did not just extend to Europeans. Jenny Hale Pulsipher and Bradley J. Dixon have shown that the formal relations between native peoples and Britain was similar to other subject-sovereign arrangements.[35] Whatever their skin colour or background, subjects invoked their ties to Britain and their titles as "British subjects" in order to guarantee their rights with the ruling monarch.

Recently, the terms "whig" and "tory" have become less common in Revolutionary historiography than "patriot" and "loyalist," but they are also emblematic of the historical pitfalls associated with the use of politicised epithets.[36] Pauline Maier, Gordon Wood, and Bernard Bailyn used the phrase "Real Whig," a term denoting an ideological belief in anti-authoritarianism and popular sovereignty, in their studies of the voluminous pamphlet literature that emerged during the Revolution.[37] But this term was and remains problematic. The word "Real" in "Real Whig" was an important signifier in eighteenth-century discourse that a war over words was being fought, as politicians claimed that they were the "real" inheritors of "whig" politicians who had instigated the Glorious Revolution in 1688.[38] Furthermore, historians have been just as wedded to the terms "country" and "court" when speaking about "whiggism."[39] Parliamentarians in England referred to patriotic politicians as "Country whigs" and corrupted parliamentarians as "Court whigs." These distinctions were also a matter of perspective and were bitterly contested in British politics. Even the notion of "radical Whigs," a phrase that Marjoleine Kars uses to describe the partisans' ideology, makes little sense given that an association with radicalism was taboo in British politics.[40] In short, the historical use of

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35 Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and Bradley J. Dixon, '"His one Netev ples": The Chowans and the Politics of Native Petitions in the Colonial South', *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (January 2019), pp. 41-74.

36 The decreasing popularity of "whig" and "tory" in the historiography can be seen in searches of academic books through Google Ngram Viewer.

37 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*; Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); and Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972).

38 For the Glorious Revolution of 1688, see Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Lisa Jardine, *Going Dutch: How England Plundered Holland's Glory* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

39 The "court" and "country" distinction can be found in Nelson, *Royalist Revolution*; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

40 For the use of "radical whig" in the historiography, see Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

"whig" was highly contingent and any attempt to preface that term with descriptors – "real," "radical," "authoritarian," and "establishment" – will, more likely than not, misrepresent the political opinions of different persons.[41] Like "whig," "tory" was a similarly contested term. Eveline Cruickshanks and Linda Colley have shown that the "Tory Party" held similar ideals as the "radical Whigs": opposition to a standing army, parliamentary corruption, and party politics.[42] Early Americanists' use of the word "tory," then, has also been affected by the victor's history.[43] The partisans often used that epithet to denigrate their opponents as supporters of the exiled Stuart dynasty. Once historians contextualise "whig" and "tory" within the broader sweep of eighteenth-century political life it becomes clear that, far from having stable, concrete meanings, these epithets were a fundamental part of the war over words in Britain and its colonies.

There is no single correct terminology to use in place of these four epithets, but this dissertation proposes three terms of convenience – partisan, neutral, and disaffected – which may help to surmount the problems outlined above. The word "partisan" moves scholars away from terms, like "patriot" and "whig," which are the product of memory politics. "Partisan" can be defined in two ways: as an adherent or proponent of a particular cause, and as a soldier in a guerrilla force.[44] Whilst this study will apply the former definition of "partisan," there have been a number of scholars who, when using the term, argue that the partisans were an irregular, extra-legal organisation. T. H. Breen and Holger Hoock argue that the label "insurgent" properly identifies the partisans.[45] Breen, for one, notes that the 'patriots who are generally credited with mounting the Revolution were in fact the beneficiaries of rebellious insurgents

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2002); and Paul A. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

41 The use of "authoritarian Whig" and "establishment Whig" can be found in Justin Du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire: Taxes, Politics, and the Origins of American Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

42 The "Tory Party" in Britain has been explored in two prominent works: Eveline Cruickshanks, *Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979); and Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

43 For examples of historians who use "tory," see Knouff, *Soldiers' Revolution*; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); and Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

44 'Partisan', *OED*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138290?rskey=xGzxja&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>, accessed 15 June 2019.

45 T. H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010); and Holger Hoock, *Scars of Independence: America's Violent Birth* (New York: Crown, 2017). For more on violence and its linkage to the fall of deference, see also Allan Kulikoff, 'Revolutionary Violence and the Origins of American Democracy', *Journal of the Historical Society* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 229-260.

who initially sparked resistance.'[46] There are two problems with Breen's use of the word "insurgent." First, Robert Parkinson has shown that "insurgent" was an important epithet in this period for someone launching an internal "rebellion."[47] As a result, this term was heavily contested as the British and the partisans alike denounced their enemies as "rebels" and "insurgents." Second, despite his emphasis on bottom-up history, Breen implicitly distinguishes between ordinary people, who were the "insurgents," and political elites, who were "patriots." Without 'tens of thousands of ordinary people' prepared 'to take up arms in expectation of killing and possibly being killed', Breen declares, 'a handful of elite gentlemen arguing about political theory makes for a debating society, not a revolution.'[48] His study, which associates ordinary people with violent actions of protest and elites with intellectual thought, perpetuates the division between social and intellectual histories of the Revolution.[49] In fact, as this dissertation will show, ordinary colonists were active participants in the war over words and deserve a place in histories of political thought in the Revolution.

Neutrals also deserve their own place within this spectrum of allegiances. These inhabitants were willing to pivot and negotiate between both sides in order to remain out of the conflict.[50] Generally, there were two classes of neutrals: those who tried to stay out of the conflict because of expediency, and those persons, such as the Religious Society of Friends (also known as "Quakers"), who objected to war as a point of principle. Epithets were an important, yet underexamined, part of these inhabitants' neutrality strategy. As will be seen throughout this study, some neutrals behaved as "whigs" or "tories" for whoever was in their company. Sometimes people even switched their allegiances to accommodate dinner guests in their own home. This attitude infuriated British soldiers and the partisan leadership alike. 'I should be very sorry to trust any one of them out of my sight', wrote Captain John Bowater, a British officer stationed in New York. 'They swallow the Oaths of Allegiance to the King, & Congress, Alternatively, with as much ease as your Lordship does poached Eggs…nothing but

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46 Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, p. 4.

47 Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), p. 199.

48 Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, p. 4.

49 The original call to unite materialist and idealist approaches to Revolutionary history can be found in Gordon S. Wood, 'Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (January 1966), pp. 3-32. See also Alfred F. Young, 'Historians and the "Transforming Hand"' in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *The Transforming Hand of Revolution: Reconsidering the American Revolution as a Social Movement* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1995), pp. 346-492.

50 My emphasis on "negotiation" is influenced by Alfred F. Young, 'Afterword: How Radical Was the American Revolution?', in *idem*., ed., *Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), pp. 317-364. Historians of other rebellions and revolutions have also focused on neutrals. See Marjoleine Kars, 'Dodging Rebellion: Politics and Gender in the Berbice Slave Uprising of 1763', *American Historical Review* 121, no. 1 (February 2016), pp. 39-69.

a total Extirpation of the Inhabitants of this Country, will ever make it a desirable object of any Prince or State.'[51] Sung Bok Kim, Michael McDonnell, and Kathleen DuVal have captured the experiences of some neutral inhabitants in colonies and states from New York down to the Gulf Coast near Florida.[52] As Duval argues in regard to the Gulf of Mexico, 'Allegiances were complicated, seldom tied to simple national or imperial loyalties.'[53] 'Familial or community ties', she notes, 'often trumped more abstract identities, and allegiances could shift depending on who promised what and who seemed likely to prevail.'[54] There is sometimes a tendency in this literature, though, to call neutrals "disaffected." The problem with using "disaffected" as a synonym for neutral is that, as we will see in the second chapter, neutrality can become disaffection if a person was pushed to resist, but not all persons who were disaffected wanted to remain neutral. This is the reason why another label is needed, the "disaffected," in order to capture the experiences of those who felt pushed to resist the Congress, whether by words or force of arms.

The definition of the term "disaffected" in this thesis is therefore distinct from recent historical usage. There have been two historiographical approaches to "disaffection." Ann M. Osterhout has offered one of these in her history of opposition to the Revolution in Pennsylvania. She argues that "loyalism" was a subcategory of disaffection, which included pacifist Quakers and non-pacifist opponents of the ruling authorities.[55] But her approach does not delineate another category of neutrals. Osterhout frames two opposing sides: the "revolutionaries," which is itself a problematic term that glorifies the partisans, and the "disaffected." Ronald Hoffman offered a second approach to disaffection. He argued that the "patriot" and "tory" distinction was not a useful one and that instead scholars needed to center the disaffected as a powerful ideological force, one that turned revolutionary ideas and ideals into an opposition movement against the Committees and Continental Congress who wanted to force them to enlist in the war. Aaron Sullivan has followed Hoffman's lead.[56] He argues

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51 Captain John Bowater to Basil Feilding, the Sixth Early of Denbigh, 11 June 1778, in Marion Balderston and David Syrett, eds., *The Lost War: Letters from British Officers during the American Revolution*, intro. by Henry Steele Commager (New York: Horizon Press, 1975), p. 131.

52 Sung Bok Kim, 'The Limits of Politicisation in the American Revolution: The Experience of Westchester County, New York', *Journal of American History* 80, no. 3 (December 1993), pp. 868-889; McDonnell, *Politics of War*; and Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016).

53 *Ibid*., p. 3.

54 *Ibid*.

55 Anne M. Osterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 5.

56 Ronald Hoffman, 'The "Disaffected" in the Revolutionary South', in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), pp. 273-316. See also Emory G. Evans, 'Trouble in the Backcountry: Disaffection in Southwest

that historians need to set the disaffected 'not just in between but *apart from* both the Revolutionaries and the Loyalists'.[57] This 'is essential', he notes, 'if we are to engage in the worthwhile efforts of identifying their part in the Revolution and seeing the Revolution through their eyes.'[58] There is much with which to agree in this statement. But it may be more worthwhile to apply Hoffman and Sullivan's logic – that the disaffected used the same ideas and ideals as the partisans to different ends – to those persons often labelled as "loyalists." Indeed, as mentioned in the section on subjecthood, those persons often cast as "loyalists" did not always frame their disaffection through loyalty. Those persons who were labelled as "disaffected" could be a draft rioter, someone who refused out of principal to take the oaths of allegiance, or a provincial soldier who fought in the British army. This is not to argue that "loyalism" had no intellectual content – it consisted of a multitude of ideas including Anglicanism, royalism, and a need for a return to order. But the thesis will show that, at its heart, the "loyalists" were a larger confederacy of persons who often shared one key characteristic: disaffection to the protest movement and eventually the Revolution that had turned their lives upside down.

If the usual terms do not adequately capture the nuances of identity for European-descended persons, they are even less helpful for others. Alongside their politicised origins, when studying epithets historians also need to be mindful that native peoples used different terms and metaphors than the colonists. This point may seem obvious. But, despite the numerous studies of how indigenous peoples conceived of epithets, there is still a tendency in scholarship to use "patriot" and "loyalist" to identify Indians who sided with the partisans or Britain. For example, in a section on Indian peoples and their variegated responses to independence, Alan Taylor notes that 'southern New England's Indians sent men to fight and die for the Patriot cause.'[59] But was that how the many Indian persons who sided with the United States, including the Catawba nation in Virginia, understood their actions?[60] Rather than

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Virginia During the American Revolution', in Ronald Hoffman et al, eds., *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry During the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), pp. 179-212.

57 Aaron Sullivan, *The Disaffected: Britain's Occupation of Philadelphia During the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 232.

58 *Ibid*.

59 Taylor, *American Revolutions*, p. 241.

60 For the Catawba, see James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), ch. 6. The complicated choices that Indian nations made in the war are captured in Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian country: Crisis and diversity in Native American communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Caitlin A. Fitz, '"Suspected on Both Sides": Little Abraham, Iroquois Neutrality, and the American Revolution', *Journal of the Early Republic* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 299-335. The problems of Europeans in understanding Indian badges of identity is highlighted in James H. Merrell, '"The Cast of His

"patriots" or "loyalists," Indian nations regularly used kinship metaphors – "brothers," "cousins," or "father" – for their friends and foes.[61] Jane T. Merritt argues that 'metaphors…became an important point of entry' to European-Indian negotiations.[62] 'Native peoples', she notes, 'often applied metaphoric kinship terms to their political relations. Whether they appealed to their "brothers," "cousins," "uncles," or "grandfathers" during a treaty conference, each of these symbolic kinship designations meant something specific about the role and responsibilities of each party and set a hierarchy of authority within the meeting.'[63] Europeans noticed these metaphors too. The colonists often commented on the 'infinity of Metaphors' that indigenous orators used in their negotiations with Europeans and fellow Indians.[64] One example is the term "women." Gunlög Fur has shown that, rather than being a negative term, the Lenape peoples of western Pennsylvania were called "women" because they were renowned for practicing the traditionally-female role of bringing different Indian nations together for diplomatic negotiations.[65] Centering native peoples and their language of metaphors further helps to show that the epithets "patriot" and "loyalist" limit our understanding of the vast array of terms in North America.

To add to the problems with traditional historical labels, scholars also have to reckon with the fact that this early American vocabulary has a colonised legacy. These colonial undertones need to be understood when discussing indigenous and black experiences in the Revolution. James Merrell argues that historians continue to use colonised language when discussing America's indigenous inhabitants. European-inflected terms such as "settlers," "settlement," "backcountry," and "hunter" denigrate indigenous peoples and reduce them to a

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Countenance": Reading Andrew Montour', in Ronald Hoffman et al, eds., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 13-39.

61 For these networks of kinship, see Theda Purdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), esp. 41-48; Sam Lakomäki, *Gathering Together: The Shawnee People through Diaspora and Nationhood, 1600-1870* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), ch. 2; and Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), ch. 3.

62 Jane T. Merritt, 'Metaphor, Meaning, and Misunderstanding: Language and Power on the Pennsylvania Frontier', in Andrew R. L. Cayton and Frederika J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 73.

63 *Ibid*., pp. 73-74.

64 Sean P. Harvey, *Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to the Reservation* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 38. For more on linguistic encounters, see Sean P. Harvey and Sarah Rivett, 'Colonial Indigenous Language Encounters in North America and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World', *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2017), pp. 442-473.

65 Gunlög Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 196-198. The vitally important role of native women in diplomacy is explored in Juliana Barr, 'Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the "Borderlands" of the Early Southwest', *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 2011), pp. 5-46.

subservient status in comparison to "civilised" colonists and "settlers." As a result of misusing these terms, early Americanists are all, Merrell declares, 'in more ways than one, "colonial historians."'[66] To accommodate Merrell's criticisms, this dissertation will use "colonist" for America's white inhabitants, whether they lived in the east or west, in order to acknowledge what they were: colonisers.[67] And since "Native Americans" was rarely used by America's first peoples, except as a pejorative, the text will use the names of individual native nations or plural terms such as "Indians," "native peoples," and "indigenous persons" when collectively discussing their actions and complex motivations.

In regard to America's black inhabitants, the problems of language also concern issues of colonisation and agency. The English language of slavery was, Christopher Tomlins argues, a 'technology of colonising' – 'a means by which designs, structures, institutions [of power] might be imagined, created, implemented, and implanted.'[68] These structures remain evident in the language that early Americanists use to talk about the issues of slavery and freedom. Historians are particularly attuned to the distinction between "slave" and "enslaved person." The first term, Joseph C. Miller argues, makes people's sense of self solely about their enslavement.[69] The latter term, in contrast, communicates the fact that the majority of black people were forced into captivity in America. The word "enslaved," then, allows people's identities to be viewed through the struggle for freedom from enslavement. Taking these issues into account, the thesis will not apply terms to such persons that they did not use themselves. Therefore, "African-descended peoples" and "black person" will be used throughout. "African American" will not be utilised as a moniker for all black peoples. That epithet had its own politicised history that will be discussed in the third chapter. Given the racial legacies of language, historians must be mindful of the rhetoric used when writing about the problematic

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66 James H. Merrell, 'Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians', *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 2012), p. 512.

67 For settler colonialism, which involves the replacement of indigenous societies with an invasive settler society (a type of polity that can be seen in the many contexts, including the United States, Australia, and Canada), see Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006), pp. 387-409; Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); Honor Sachs, *Home Rule: Households, Manhood, and National Expansion on the Eighteenth-Century Kentucky Frontier* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015); and Bethel Saler, *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). For some new thoughts on the usefulness of the term "settler colonialism," see Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, eds., 'Forum: Settler Colonialism in Early American History', *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019), pp. 361-450.

68 Christopher Tomlins *Freedom Bound: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America, 1580-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 506-507.

69 Joseph C. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

realities of history. As Merrell writes, 'word watching is not political correctness…it is merely correctness.'[70]

After challenging and replacing problematic labels, it becomes possible to examine what identity terms were in common use at the time. Historians of nationalism, including David Waldstreicher, Kariann Akemi Yokota, and Robert Parkinson, have examined the cultural practices of nation-building – the parades, print culture, and racist "war stories" that helped shape a "Common Cause" against Britain – but they do not center epithets in their studies.[71] This is an important omission because the partisans formed these epithets in order to help them understand themselves and others in the Revolution. Though scholars of "American" identity tend to write their histories to and from the Revolution – with Jill Lepore and Jon Butler arguing that the origins of that identity were in the pre-Revolutionary era, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Carolyn Eastman looking to the early republic for the processes that drove the expansion of "Americanness" – historians must not forget the central importance of the founding period.[72] This thesis maintains that it was during the Revolutionary era that the partisans started to find

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[70] James H. Merrell, 'Coming to Terms with Early America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 2012), p. 540.

[71] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Benjamin Irvin, *Clothed in Robes of Sovereignty: The Continental Congress and the People Out of Doors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Parkinson, *Common Cause*. For more on the cultural practices of nationalism, see Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became A Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Shane White, '"It Was a Proud Day": African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834', *Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (June 1994), pp. 13-50.

[72] For identity construction before the Revolution, see Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); and Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000). Much of this literature on the colonial period has focused on New England. See John Canup, *Out of the Wilderness: The Emergence of an American Identity in Colonial New England* (Middletown: Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1990); and Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975).

For scholars who focus on identity-formation in the Revolution, who argue that an "American" identity was overrun with local divisions, see Ignacio Gallup-Diaz et al, eds., *Anglicizing America: Empire, Revolution, Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); John Murrin, 'Roof without Walls: The Dilemma of American National Identity', in Richard Beeman et al, eds., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 333-348; and Gregory T. Knouff, *The Soldiers' Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

For the post-Revolutionary period, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Stephanie Kermes, *Creating an American Identity: New England, 1789-1825* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); and Jasper M. Trautsch, 'The origins and nature of American nationalism', *National Identities* 18, no. 3 (2016), pp. 289-312.

the words to understand who they were, build alliances based on these ideals, and then wield these epithets to attack their enemies. If the pre-Revolutionary period was the moment when the colonists envisioned themselves as British subjects who were equal to, yet unique from, the metropole, the partisans in the late eighteenth-century developed the epithets that would help them understand their distinctiveness as "Americans." This does not mean that this process was uncontested.[73] The level of contestation that these terms drew both from within and without the thirteen mainland colonies and United States meant that, far from having stable definitions, the partisans' terms of identification were adaptable (with participants constantly appropriating these labels) but also unstable (with their meanings often in flux). One reason for this fractiousness was that there were a number of other groups and peoples who used epithets. The many indigenous peoples in North America, particularly the Shawnee and Lenape of the Ohio river valley, attacked the colonists as "white people" and "Long Knives" in order to emphasise the Europeans' treachery and violence. The disaffected also declared themselves to be "friends of government," "refugees," and "loyalists." Rather than emerging separately, therefore, the partisans made and remade epithets in conversation and opposition to the rival terms of both their internal and external enemies.

The epithets that the partisans created in this contested period reveal a larger shift in how people at the time understood belonging – the right to live in and have a sense of affinity to the United States. In the transition from thirteen colonies to thirteen independent states, the partisans partly replaced the ideals that had sustained the British Empire, a hierarchical order where subjects were able to attain rights and rewards from their sovereign, with the deceptively-simple notion that one only belonged in America if they merited the privilege. Historians have not discussed this shift in detail. The "citizenship revolution," Douglas Bradburn maintains, inaugurated a new ideal of belonging: that contemporaries could choose their national status.[74] There are two problems with this literature. For one, subjecthood could

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[73] The limitations of, and conflicts over, nationalism in the Revolutionary and early national periods can be found in Benjamin E. Park, *American Nationalisms: Imagining Union in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Andrew R. L. Cayton, 'We Are All Nationalists, We Are All Localists', *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1998), pp. 521-528; Michael A. McDonnell, 'National Identity and the American War for Independence Reconsidered', *Australian Journal of American Studies* 20, no. 1 (July 2001), pp. 3-17; and Andrew W. Robertson, '"Look on This Picture… And on This!": Nationalism, Localism, and Partisan Images of Otherness in the United States, 1787-1820', *American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (October 2001), pp. 1263-1280.

[74] Bradburn, *Citizenship Revolution*, pp. 9-10. See also James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U. S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors*; and Kunal M. Parker, *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

also be chosen.[75] Moreover, the historiography on citizenship does not closely examine epithets. As a result, Bradburn and others do not focus on the term "citizen" as one label amongst many in this period. If "citizen" is examined in concert with other epithets, one can see that a significant shift was taking in place – from a culture of belonging based on birthright subjecthood to one partly based on merit. In creating and revitalising epithets at a time of division and distrust, the partisans ensured that people could only use titles if they deserved them. Since the imperial crisis, when the partisans aimed to prove the merits of their cause against "taxation without representation," the ideal of merit was an important driving force of identity-formation for those who wanted to prove that they were different to Britain and its allies. Far from the positive conception many scholars have of merit, this principle caused a war over words as America and Britain's inhabitants struggled over who merited epithets.[76] The politics of epithets was the politics of merit.

Befitting a 'Janus-faced' Revolution, a period of catastrophic war as well as political experimentation, the principle of merit, which defined who could use the partisans' epithets, was two-sided.[77] This contest allowed politically marginalised inhabitants, including white women and enslaved persons, to claim rights and belonging as meritorious "citizens," and for white men, whether rich or poor, to call themselves "patriots." Yet this struggle over social status also bred fighting words, epithets that were regularly used by white male elites and others to inspire confrontation, exclusion, and violence. The contest for social equality, the right to be considered as of equal status, in the early United States was partly born from an egalitarian ideal – a society based on merit.[78] Without a guarantee that they would be considered as equals, America's inhabitants protested, petitioned, and sometimes fought in order to prove that they were worthy of these titles. This shift toward merit as a fundamental yardstick of belonging was by no means incompatible with the growing trend in natural rights thinking (rights to life, liberty, and property that were independent of a country's law and customs) in this period. In fact, the turn toward natural rights may have been generative of new hierarchies around race, class, and gender as elites tried to cement their right to rule in an age of revolutions when

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[75] The idea that subjecthood as based, in part, on consent is explored in Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, p. 5. For subjects choosing another sovereign, see Hannah Weiss Muller, 'From Requête to Petition: Petitioning the Monarch Between Empires'*, Historical Journal* 60, no. 3 (2017), pp. 659-686.

[76] For a discussion of merit as a positive invention, see Joseph F. Kett, *Merit: The History of a Founding Ideal from the American Revolution to the Twenty-First Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[77] Robert G. Parkinson, 'Janus's Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019), pp. 545-561.

[78] For an exploration of the many forms of equality and inequality in America, both during and after the Revolution, see J.R. Pole, *The Pursuit of Equality in American History* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1978).

aristocratic rule was repeatedly challenged from below.[79] Thomas Jefferson had argued in the Declaration of Independence that 'all men are created equal'.[80] He did not mention that, in a Revolution where actions determined who could use epithets, not all men or women would be created as "Americans."

Methodology

In order to explore the politics of epithets described above, this thesis considers the perspectives of both Britain and America's inhabitants. Despite the growth of Atlantic history, which integrates discussions of Britain's imperial peripheries and metropole, surprisingly few studies compare and contrast British and colonial viewpoints of the same events.[81] (Justin Du Rivage's recent study of imperial policies across the British Empire is one prominent exception to this rule.)[82] Scholars, such as Robert Parkinson, Dror Wahrman, and Troy Bickham, usually focus on either British or colonial perspectives, and not both at the same time.[83] This more contained approach is taken because these historians focus primarily on newspaper networks and public opinion for particular participants, which to be successful requires a more localised

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79 The rise of natural rights thinking in America is explored in Michael P. Zuckert, *The Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996). My emphasis on how natural rights was often used to reinforce existing hierarchies has been influenced by the philosopher Michel Foucalt, who made clear that liberation just clears the way for new power relationships which must be controlled by practices of freedom. (Michael Foucault, 'The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom', in Paul Rainbow, ed., *Michael Foucault: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Volume 1, Ethics* [London: Penguin, 2000], p. 284.) One example is the term "natural aristocracy" (denoting a society where the most virtuous and talented would rule), which James Harrington and other political theorists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created in response to the question of who would rule a society where all men were equal. See James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, 1656, in J. G. A. Pocock, ed., *Harrington: The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1992]), p. 142.

80 'Declaration of Independence', *NA*, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>, accessed 15 May 2018.

81 For Atlantic history, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Alison Games, 'Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities', *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), pp. 741-757; and Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, 'Atlantic Cultures and the Age of Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (October 2017), pp. 667-696. The Atlantic history approach has also produced a "new" British history, which attempts to integrate England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the wider empire into a cohesive discussion of "Greater Britain." See J. G. A. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 4 (December 1975), pp. 601-621; *idem*., 'The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary', *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (April 1999), pp. 490-500; David Armitage, 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (April 1999), pp. 427-445; and Richard Bourke, 'Pocock and the Presuppositions of the New British History', *Historical Journal* 53, no. 3 (September 2010), pp. 747-770.

82 Du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire*.

83 Parkinson, *Common Cause*; Wahrman, *Making of the Modern Self*; and Troy Bickham, *Making Headlines: The American Revolution as Seen through the British Press* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).

context. This focused discussion is insufficient when dealing with epithets that regularly crossed borders and boundaries in a war over words.

But, in identifying the larger trends in term-use throughout the colonies and Britain, one also needs to pay attention to how people used epithets on the ground, in a more local setting. Virginia, the most populous and also one of the most politically powerful colonies is, for two reasons, an ideal location to explore these local perspectives.[84] First, this dissertation will involve a number of competing groups, and focusing on Virginia, a huge colony and state with a wide array of different inhabitants that encompassed modern-day Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, and much of the Midwest, allows for a more detailed discussion of the many conflicting meanings that Virginians ascribed to those labels.[85] Second, there are distinct regional differences between the thirteen mainland colonies and states, which means this thesis will contend with Virginia-specific epithets, such as "Long Knife," which was a term used by many indigenous peoples for the colonists.[86] Though some of the chapters make interventions in the historiography on Jefferson's birthplace, this is not a history of Virginia. For the purposes of this discussion, the Old Dominion is a setting where one can explore the interactions of multiple historical actors over epithets, whether they were from the colony and state itself, and what they suggest about the larger cultural shifts in belonging in the Revolution. Therefore, by focusing on one particular area whilst integrating examples from areas beyond Virginia, the thesis will investigate regional peculiarities whilst also identifying the terms that were more commonly used in Britain and the other twelve colonies and states.

In examining how contemporaries were able to use these labels, this dissertation will not overstress the agency of participants in the Revolution.[87] For one, there were clear class-based biases in who merited labels, such as "patriot," that were often used to glorify elite patrician values. The partisans even used the word 'citizen' at funerals, as will be seen in the third chapter, to celebrate Virginian gentlemen. The discussions around class in this thesis have

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[84] For important histories of Virginia which will be drawn upon throughout this thesis, see Adele Hast, *Loyalism in Revolutionary Virginia: The Norfolk Area and the Eastern Shore* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982); Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); McDonnell, *Politics of War*; John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775-1783* (Williamsburg: University Press of Virginia, 1988); Albert H. Tillson, Jr., *Gentry and Common Folk: Political Culture on a Virginia Frontier 1740-1789* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991); and *idem*., *Accommodating Revolutions: Virginia's Northern Neck in an Era of Transformations, 1760-1810* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

[85] For Virginia's territorial limits, see Edward Countryman, 'Indians, the Colonial Order, and the Social Significance of the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April 1996), pp. 349-350.

[86] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1991]), p. 394.

[87] The challenges of thinking about agency are explored in Walter Johnson, 'On Agency', *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2003), pp. 113-124.

been helped by a rich literature on the subject.[88] Gordon S. Wood, Alan Taylor, and Alfred F. Young argue that the Revolution undermined ideals of deference between gentlemen and ordinary people in favour of equality between those in power and those without political authority.[89] In opposition to this school of thought, Michael Zuckerman and Peter Thompson note that an egalitarian sensibility in the colonial period gave way to a hierarchical one post-Revolution.[90] Whilst equality was an important theme at this time, this study generally agrees with Tom Cutterham that rather than 'defeating inequality and hierarchy, the revolution forced it to take on new forms.'[91] One of these new forms was merit – and elites, who felt that their aristocratic status was increasingly under attack, were more than prepared to use this ideal to sure up their position in the late eighteenth century.

It would be a mistake to argue that these epithets were the preserve of political elites, however. To access the voices that are often forgotten in conceptual histories, this dissertation uses a wide variety of written sources including pamphlets, magazines, and sermons. Biblical and classical idioms, replete within these documents, allowed participants to understand and frame events.[92] However, it remains difficult to determine how widely read these documents were. The problem of knowing what impact these words had on the ground also applies to the many laws, declarations, and proclamations of the period. Due to the challenges of geography, Virginia, let alone the British Empire or the United States, had problems with enforcing its

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88 For class politics in Revolution America, see in particular Richard B. Morris, 'Class Struggle and the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, no. 1(January 1962), pp. 3-29; McDonnell, *Politics of War*; and Simon Middleton and Billy G. Smith, eds., *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

89 See Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Taylor, *American Revolutions*; and Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

90 See Michael Zuckerman, 'Endangered Deference, Imperiled Patriarchy: Tales from the Marchlands', *Early American Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 232-252; and Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). For these debates, see 'Deference or Defiance in Eighteenth-Century America? A Round Table', *Journal of American History* 85, no. 1 (June 1998), pp. 13-97; and 'Deference in Early America: The Life and/or Death of an Historiographical Concept', *Early American Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 227-402.

91 Tom Cutterham, *Gentlemen Revolutionaries: Power and Justice in the New American Republic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 160. For the colonial period as riven with inequality, see the essays in Carla Gardina Pestana and Sharon V. Salinger, eds., *Inequality in Early America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999).

92 For an introduction to pamphlets as a genre, see Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, ch. 1; and for sermons, see James P. Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 15-17. For the importance of biblical idioms, see Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 13; and for classical idioms, see Nicholas P. Cole, 'America and Ancient and Modern Europe', in Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole, eds., *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p. 188.

policies.[93] As a result of these reception issues, these public-facing sources will be supplemented with private writings, particularly letters and diaries. Still, these two media introduce their own difficulties. They were edited, used as tools of self-fashioning, and, especially in the case of letters, conformed to rules of comportment that need to be understood if one is to decode the meaning of an utterance.[94] Lastly, the thesis includes histories and memoirs. Alfred F. Young and Eileen Ka-May Cheng have shown that, although memory was not completely fallible, these sources were politicised and often created for purposes beyond retelling a simple story about the Revolution.[95] Despite the weaknesses inherent to the individual source material, these challenges can be counteracted if the sources are used together in a complementary fashion. For example, letters and pamphlets can be used together to see whether epithets that were utilised in private correspondence made their way into the public arena. This approach is necessary to understand the politics of epithets and the terms which were present in a wide variety of literary genres.

These epithets were not the preserve of men either. A multitude of female historians, including Ruth Bloch, Linda K. Kerber, Mary Beth Norton, Joan R. Gundersen, Sharon Block, and Rosemarie Zagarri, have acknowledged the importance of women as historical actors and the significance of gender – like race and class – as a signifier of power relations.[96] There is still much work to be done, however, in integrating gender, female voices, and the importance of the family as a social, economic, and cultural force into historical work on the American

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[93] For the challenges of geography in Virginia, see James Corbett David, *Dunmore's New World: The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America – With Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping, Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Illegal Royal Weddings* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), pp. 46-51.

[94] Letters are explored in Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). For diaries as a tool of self-fashioning, see Stuart Sherman, "Diary and Autobiography," in John Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 649; and Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), ch. 4.

[95] See Young, *Shoemaker and the Tea Party*; Eileen Ka-May Cheng*, The Plain and Noble Garb of Truth: Nationalism & Impartiality in American Historical Writing, 1784-1860* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2008); and Michael A. McDonnell, 'War Stories: Remembering and Forgetting the American Revolution', in Spero and Zuckerman, eds., *Revolution Reborn*, pp. 9-28.

[96] Ruth H. Bloch, 'The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America', *Signs* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1987), pp. 37-58; Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); *idem*., *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Formation of American Society* (New York: Random House, 1997); Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World*; Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

Revolution.[97] This study will examine women as active participants in the war over words throughout the period under consideration. This is essential, Ruth Bloch argues, because 'conceptions of sexual difference…underlay some of the most basic premises of the Revolution and shaped important ideological changes in the early Republic.'[98] Simple terms, like "spy," often had gendered undertones that need to be unpacked if the politics of epithets is to be uncovered in all its complexity.

In addition to written sources, whether constructed by female or male hands, the dissertation's analysis is also based on a qualitative and quantitative study of term-use in British and colonial newspapers. These sources also have their difficulties, but, if the statistical research is combined with the other written sources, then one can provide valuable insights into how terms changed over time. In 1775, thirty-six newspapers operated in the colonies and, as Robert Parkinson has shown, they were valuable tools of building a "Common Cause" against Britain.[99] The claims of newspaper writers, therefore, cannot be taken at face-value. There are also challenges with using newspapers as quantitative sources. Scholars of the digital humanities, including Bob Nicholson and Lara Putnam, have warned about the dangers of 'keyword blinkers': that historians may arrive directly at a source and bypass its wider context.[100] It is essential, therefore, that scholars focus on the context in which these terms are discussed.[101] Newspaper repositories are themselves archives, sites where knowledge was produced and disseminated for a particular purpose.[102] For instance, the British Library's Burney Collection, which this thesis uses for the British papers, only draws upon newspapers

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97 The importance of family relations in the eighteenth century is covered in Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American revolution against patriarchal authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*; and Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

98 Bloch, 'Gendered Meanings of Virtue', p. 39.

99 Parkinson, *Common Cause*, p. 39.

100 Bob Nicholson, 'The Digital Turn: Exploring the Methodological Possibilities of Digital Newspaper Archives', *Media History* 19, no. 1 (2013), p. 61. See also Lara Putnam, 'The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitised Sources and the Shadows They Cast', *American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (April 2016), pp. 377-402; and Molly O'Hagan Hardy, 'Archives-Based Digital Projects in Early America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019), pp. 451-476.

101 Putnam, 'Transnational and the Text-Searchable', p. 396.

102 For social histories of the archive, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Liesbeth Corens et al, eds., *Archives & Information in the Early Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Ada Ferrer, 'Talk About Haiti: The Archive and the Atlantic's Haitian Revolution', in Dorris Garraway, ed., *Tree of Liberty: Atlantic Legacies of the Haitian Revolution* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2008), pp. 21-40; and Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

and pamphlets collected by the Reverend Charles Burney.[103] This collection contains an impressive 1,271 titles, but most of these papers are not available in complete runs.[104] America's Historical Newspapers, which this study will use for papers in America, has similar issues.[105] Consequently, this dissertation will not focus on the absolute totals in term-use in any given year. Instead, it will highlight trends in how many individual newspaper articles have used a particular term as a percentage of the total number of newspapers in circulation.[106] In separate graphs showing American and British newspaper coverage of particular words, this thesis brings these quantitative findings into dialogue with the qualitative sources outlined above. This complementary approach, which is necessary to unpack both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of primary sources, will provide a systematic foundation to the thesis without sacrificing the individual case studies and stories that literary materials provide.

In a project that focuses on words, it is important to be mindful of the low literary rates in early America and the importance of oral-aural cultures in Virginia. These shortcomings in literacy impose significant limitations on the sources, particularly when considering the number of people who used epithets. Kenneth Lockridge has concluded that white male literacy in North America, outside of New England, stood at below two-thirds; and in some locations in the southern colonies no more than twenty-five per cent of adults could sign their own name.[107] Rhys Isaac claims that speech, dramaturgical performance, and face-to-face interactions, were far more important in an oral-aural culture such as Virginia.[108] Public performances such as dancing, Isaac argues, were 'some of the most powerful declarations of self.'[109] 'These declarations were [all] the more powerful', he continues, 'because [they were] resonant all the way up and down society.'[110] The issue of performance has been discussed by other historians. Paul Pickering has shown that popular performance involved a range of

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[103] 'Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century British Newspapers', *British Library*, <http://find.gale.com/bncn/dispAdvSearch.do?method=getFields&prodId=BBCN&userGroupName=cambuni&finalAuth=true>, accessed 22 January 2019.

[104] Nicholson, 'Digital Turn', p. 60.

[105] 'America's Historical Newspapers', *Readex*, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/readex/welcome?p=EANX>, accessed 20 January 2019.

[106] The approach to newspaper articles in this thesis is similar to that found in Matthew Rainbow Hale, 'Regenerating the World: The French Revolution, Civic Festivals, and the Forging of Modern American Democracy, 1793–1795', *Journal of American History* 103, no. 4 (1 March 2017): 891–920.

[107] Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New Work: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974), pp. 77-81.

[108] Rhys Isaac, 'Dramatising the Ideology of Revolution: Popular Mobilisation in Virginia, 1774 to 1776', *William and Mary Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (July 1976), p. 362.

[109] *Ibid*., p. 360.

[110] *Ibid*., pp. 360-361. For an Atlantic study which shows the power of performance, see Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

symbols that together allowed people to make political statements 'without words.'[111] These findings are invaluable to this study. The emphasis of contemporaries on merit – on who deserved to be called a "patriot" as distinct from someone who wore the "mask of patriotism" – means that actions often determined who could use words. Therefore, historical actors did not have to explicitly shout, "I am a true patriot," in order to attain recognition as a defender of the public interest. They could prove their allegiances and merit as "patriots" by wearing a homespun shirt, raising a liberty pole in the town square, or dragging a suspected "tory" through the streets to be tarred and feathered. Those persons unwilling to act as "patriots" were considered unworthy of the title.[112]

The use of homespun shirts as a tool of performing "patriotism," as mentioned above, indicates that material culture is another indispensable part of this history. Following the work of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, who showed that objects could offer a window into past experiences and overturn previously-held models of historical interpretation, Kate Haulman, Zara Anishanslin, and Jennifer Van Horn argued that the British Empire constituted a single cultural space where objects were produced, traded, and consumed.[113] Objects, in short, were political. And these objects, Anishanslin notes, reveal an additional empire – 'an object-based *sensus communis* [common sense] that tied together inhabitants of the British Atlantic.'[114] This community of goods extended into the hinterlands of America, Van Horn argues, and allowed the 'denizens of port cities to aggregate and to solidify [a] growing communal identity.'[115] Whilst this scholarship has often remained distinct from intellectual histories of the Revolution, this development in early American historiography has important things to say about epithets. These objects – whether shirts, guns, flannel patches, or buttons – provide unique insights into how ordinary people engaged in the political sphere. Without the capacity to write pamphlets,

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[111] Paul Pickering, 'Class without Words: Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement', *Past & Present* 112, no. 1 (August 1986), p. 162. For more on the social properties of language, see Peter Burke, 'Introduction', in *idem.* and Roy Porter, eds., *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 1-20.

[112] Nicole Eustace, *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p. 15.

[113] See Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Random House, 2002); Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); and Jennifer Van Horn, *The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). The role of consumer politics in driving this "empire of goods" is explored in T. H. Breen, 'An Empire of Goods: The Anglicisation of Colonial America', *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 4 (October 1986), pp. 467-499; and *idem*., *Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[114] Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Women in Silk*, p. 11.

[115] Van Horn, *Power of Objects*, p. 11.

these persons used objects to prove their worth and distinction. By combining both British and colonial perspectives, literary sources, performance, and material culture, this thesis shows how ordinary people, and not just elites, proved that they were worthy of particular labels and epithets. In attempting to explore the contests over epithets it would be a mistake to over-emphasise the importance of words as opposed to other media and materials, including pottery, clothing, buttons, medals, and weapons. Words were not the only things that shaped people's world.[116]

Structure

Structured around key periods when epithets were debated, this thesis will focus on nineteen terms in four chronological chapters. The epithets have been chosen for each chapter because they were the most popular political labels at particular moments in the Revolutionary period. This does not mean that other epithets will not be mentioned throughout this thesis. There will be ample attention paid to related terms and labels. But, for the purposes of showing how the partisans developed the epithets that were fundamental to who they were, what they stood for, and how they framed their enemies, the dissertation will centre a number of identity terms which were of particular importance in this era. Furthermore, whilst this study's main focus is on the partisans and their attempts to construct a sense of self, the chapters will follow the rise of rival epithets, such as "friend of government" and "Long Knife." These labels were crucial points of opposition to the partisans' efforts to construct their notion of the ideal "American." Some of these terms, forged in opposition to other epithets, appear in multiple dissertation chapters because they changed in meaning. These shifts in political language were driven, for the partisans at least, by a larger transformation in what merit meant in a society riven with inequalities of race, class, and gender.

The first chapter examines the *revitalisation* of epithets during the imperial crisis with Britain from the end of the Seven Years' War against France in 1763 until the start of the war

[116] For the narrow claim that words constitute the world, see David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 233. As Armitage points out in another article, the idea that language constitutes reality has underpinned the practice of modern intellectual history. This practice began with Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969), pp. 3-53; and *idem*., *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). For more recent reflections on the history of ideas, see Peter E. Gordon, 'Contextualism and Criticism in the History of Ideas', in McMahon and Moyn, eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, pp. 33-52; David Armitage, 'On the Genealogy of Quarrels', *Critical Analysis of Law* 4, no. 2 (2017), pp. 179-189; and Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Paths in the Social History of Ideas', Joel Isaac et al, eds., *The Worlds of American Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 307-323.

at the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775. Using newspapers archives and data from the start of the Seven Years' War in 1754 until the start of the Revolutionary War, the chapter will show that the partisans, frustrated with Britain's presumption that the thirteen colonies were not carrying their weight in the British Empire, invented and revitalised six epithets – "patriot," "white person," "whig," "tory," "British American," and "American" – in order to show that the colonists were the most meritorious British subjects. The partisans declared that, because the interests of Britain and America were conjoined, they were upholding the rights of all Britons. The gradual shift toward merit as an ideal of belonging, therefore, was born out of the partisans' glorification of subjecthood, and not the complete rejection of their status as British subjects. The consequences of this shift were tumultuous as the Ohio river valley's Indian peoples, persons disaffected to the partisans, and the British government fought back against these presumptions. Many of these groups were intent on showing that the partisans, far from virtuous, were misguided protestors who were a threat to government and order in the colonies.

Following the imperial crisis, the second chapter turns to the pre-independence period: the thirteen months from the beginning of hostilities between the thirteen colonies and Britain in April 1775 until the Declaration of Independence in July 1776. In a war where one's political allegiances were increasingly important, many partisans ensured that labelling oneself as a "patriot" or "whig" was no longer enough to prove a person's loyalties. The "heat" or level of support that one showed for the partisans became the key determinant in who could be defined as a meritorious inhabitant. Through an examination of terms used in newspapers from the start of the imperial crisis in 1763 until independence, the chapter shows that the upturn in hostilities led to the *radicalisation* of another six key epithets: "rifleman," "Yankee," "friend of government," "rebel," "insurgent," and "savage." The war over these radicalised words was more violent than during the imperial crisis. At a time when the identities of inhabitants were open to suspicion, both the partisans and their disaffected opponents in Norfolk and Portsmouth, who because of perceived threats joined with Britain, were judged by the warmth of their political opinions. The partisans wanted inhabitants to be warm supporters of the cause, whilst their enemies saw warmth as a weakness – an indication that the "shirtmen," as many disaffected persons liked to call the "riflemen," were a threat to their families, homes, and livelihoods. They were soon proved right.

The third chapter examines the period after independence in July 1776 up to the start of negotiations over the Treaty of Paris, which ended the conflict, in November 1782. The formation of a new nation, the United States of America, again redefined what it meant to be a

meritorious person. Only those who defined themselves as against Britain merited the titles that the partisans transformed after independence. Following the rise of these labels in newspapers from the crisis until the end of hostilities in 1782, the chapter reveals that the newly-independent partisans' attempts to prove that they were not dependent on the British Empire for their sense of self led to the *reform* of six terms: "British subject," "citizen," "American," "Long Knife," "Virginian," and "republican." This reform process involved stripping epithets of their original meanings and using them to legitimate the cause against Britain and create a national character – a sense of cultural distinctiveness – for the early United States. For example, the partisans were intent on not being called "subjects." Instead, they wanted to be known as independent "citizens." Since the United States was a postcolonial nation, a country created following colonial rule, these terms were particularly important to the partisans because they concerned sovereignty. If the English problem of identity, as Dror Wahrman argues, concerned what to label the "Americans," then the partisans' issue was in finding epithets that would help to communicate their freedom from imperial rule whilst allowing them to display the merits of their cause. The partisans' laboured efforts to prove their independence through epithets, however, was a weakness as their enemies attempted to show that the supposedly meritorious supporters of independence were deeply compromised by their association with slavery, political violence, and the French government. In such a destructive war, the war over words was at its most vitriolic when independence had been achieved.

The fourth and final chapter examines the peacetime or confederation period years from the end of 1782 until the start of the Philadelphia Convention in May 1787. This was a moment when, one might assume, the tensions in the war over words would subside and the many transformations of epithets would cease. The opposite was true. In fact, as the quantitative data from newspaper runs lasting from independence until the Convention shows, the peacetime era saw the *reconstruction* of four epithets in order to contest the Revolution's memory: "refugee," "loyalist," "British American," and "citizen." After the conflict itself, there was a war for the peace – a struggle that involved multiple peoples in Britain and America who wanted to lay claim to citizenship and belonging in the British Empire or the United States. The battle over Revolutionary memory was integral to how different contemporaries framed their claims of rights and inclusion. Sometimes this was for reasons of expediency: the self-declared "loyalists" and "refugees," for example, used their service in the war to prove that Britain owed them reward as British subjects. In many cases, these rhetorical battles were about nation-building: politicians on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean tried to appropriate the war's memory to place themselves on the side of right and their enemies, who were seen to be undeserving of

inclusion, in the wrong. Lastly, the Revolution's legacy was appropriated in order to attain rights and recognition: enslaved persons, religious dissenters, and ordinary white servicemen all claimed ownership over "citizen" and the many epithets that were born in the Revolutionary period. The principle underpinning these epithets, as was the case in the other three chapters, was merit, as the partisans, many of them political elites, argued that only white male persons could become "citizens." The partisans' betrayal of the many Indian peoples, black persons, and women who had fought on their side and assisted them in the conflict set the scene for a future war over words in the decades after independence had been achieved from Britain. To understand the contest over these terms, or how this story concluded, however, we will start with the imperial crisis: a moment when the colonists battled to prove that they were the most meritorious British subjects and, in the process, changed how they understood who belonged in America.

Chapter 1

"Modern Patriots," "Dogs," and "British Americans": Revitalising Epithets during the Imperial Crisis, 1763-75

Introduction

On 30 October 1765, the protest against the Stamp Act in Williamsburg began with the phrase 'one and all.'[1] The governor of Virginia, Francis Fauquier, reported to his superiors on the Board of Trade in London that the 'mercantile people were all assembled as usual'.[2] They were not assembled to sell their wares. They were assembled to attack Colonel George Mercer, Virginia's stamp collector, who ensured that this tax on all forms of paper, including legal documents, magazines, and playing cards, was being paid. They found Mercer 'at his Father['s] Lodgings' and demanded that he resign.[3] Mercer gave into their request. Seeing his effigy hanged next to that of George Grenville, the minister responsible for the Act, was probably a shocking sight. On the breast of Grenville was inscribed: '*I am G[eorg]e G[renvill]e*, the infamous projector of American slavery'.[4] Richard Henry Lee, who had actively opposed the Stamp Act, may have been pleased at this scene. But he was about to get a taste of the mob justice that he had forced on Mercer. More than six months after Mercer resigned, reports emerged that Lee had himself applied to be a stamp collector. 'It appears that Lee, previous to his Patriotism, had made interested to be made Stamp Master himself', wrote the Reverend John Camm, '[…] Lee will find it difficult hereafter to deceive any body into an opinion of his Patriotism.'[5] Lee's betrayal became a cause célèbre. John Mercer, the prominent lawyer and father of George, attacked Lee for his mock "patriotism." Mercer thought that Lee and his co-conspirators were unworthy of the title "patriot." They deserved different appellations entirely. 'I shall therefore', he declared in September, 'call the Stafford vagrant *Gibbert*, the Enemy to Nonsense *Scandal*, and Democritus *Pillory*; their gang leader Col. Richard Henry Lee…I think may very properly and emphatically be called by the name of *Bob Booty*', a man who

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1 Francis Fauquier to the Board of Trade, 3 November 1765, in George Reese, ed., *The Official Papers of Francis Fauquier: Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, 1758-1768*, vol. 3 (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 1983), pp. 1291-1293.

2 *Ibid*.

3 *Ibid*.

4 'Prophecy from the East. Chap. I5. 6.', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 26 September 1766.

5 Reverend John Camm to Mrs. McClurg, 24 July 1766, in 'Original Letters', *William and Mary Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (April 1984), p. 238.

relentlessly pleaded for a better post.[6] Rather than his son 'assisting in the destruction of his country's liberty', Mercer argued, it was Lee who had loaded his countrymen and women 'with the chains of slavery, for the sake of a temporary advantage to himself.'[7]

This contest over "patriotism" was so emotionally charged because the Stamp Act crisis and the larger debates over "taxation without representation" partly concerned who deserved to be called a British subject. The rhetorical war over who merited the title "British subject" was important and widespread because, as was shown in the introduction, subjecthood was a language that was commonly understood in the British Atlantic and was an essential avenue for subjects to attain rights from their monarch, whether that be the Spanish, British, or French king or queen. It is strange given this context that historians have not given subjecthood sufficient attention in the imperial crisis. T. H. Breen argues that the work of British historians had forced early Americanists 'to rethink commonplace assumptions about the imperial connection and its impact on early American society.'[8] Recent research on the relationship between subjects and sovereigns has illuminated some of the conclusions that Breen made in his article, and support a need for revisions in historical thinking on the origins and nature of the crisis. More recently, Craig Yirush and Fred Anderson have shown that, rather than importing their ideas from Britain, the colonists developed their own strands of political thought and beliefs. These scholars particularly focus on the colonists in the west, who argued against Britain's opposition to westward expansion beyond the Alleghany Mountains.[9] Rather than undermine this approach, the work of Hannah Weiss Muller and others suggests that this movement was just one part of a broader attempt to reclaim subjecthood in the crisis.[10] The imperial crisis was a debate over people's relationship within the empire itself, involving far more people than the European-descended colonists.

If the crisis was primarily about subjecthood, then why did the protestors feel that this right was being taken away? The British Parliament had imposed new taxation measures to support the reconstruction of the empire after their victory against France in the Seven Years' War (1754-63). These measures would relieve Britain's huge debt burden of £122 million and

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6 'Prophecy', in *VG* (Purdie and Dixon), 26 September 1766.

7 *Ibid*.

8 Breen, 'Ideology and Nationalism', p. 14. Breen was responding to Edmund S. Morgan, 'The American Revolution: Revisions in Need of Revising', *William and Mary Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (January 1957), pp. 3-15.

9 Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire*; and Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). See also Michael Kammen, 'The Meaning of Colonization in American Revolutionary Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31, no. 3 (July 1970), pp. 337-358. For the British context on the imperial crisis, see Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

10 Echeverri, *Indian and Slave Royalists*; Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*; and McConville, *King's Three Faces*.

make policies throughout the empire stronger and more uniform.[11] Yet Britain's taxation measures clashed with the views of the colonial assemblies, which controlled each of the thirteen colonies. The assemblies considered Britain's measures as, at best, "taxation without representation," and, at worst, a conspiracy to seize power from the elected assemblies, many of whom argued that they alone could tax their subjects. Due to these measures, many colonists saw their rights as British subjects as in threat of being taken away by Parliament.

In order to reclaim their subjecthood within the empire, the partisans revitalised a number of epithets that were underutilised in colonial political culture. The resurrection and reintroduction of "patriot," "whig," "tory," "white," "British American," and "American" as important epithets was significant. For the opponents of Britain's taxation measures, these terms helped the partisans articulate what they thought was obvious: that the thirteen mainland colonies had bled and sacrificed in service to the British Empire. They were, the partisans argued, therefore the most meritorious subjects. The protestors' turn toward merit was initially – and somewhat ironically – based on a critical engagement with subjecthood and who deserved the title "British subject." As a result, the partisans' emphasis on merit – which was displayed through a multitude of means, including clothing, performance, and the intertwining of religious virtue with "patriotism" – was not without complications or contradictions. Many disaffected persons, who saw Britain's policies as just given that the colonies were in a dependent relationship to the British Empire, declared that the partisans had little claim over the term "patriotism" because they showed none of the comportment necessary for a level-headed supporter of one's country. Furthermore, many Indian inhabitants of the Ohio river valley attacked the protestors' insistence that only the best subjects were "white persons." To most native peoples, particularly the Shawnee and Delaware, the crisis had changed nothing: the colonists who invaded Indian country were the same "white people" who had created problems since the colonisation of Virginia in 1607.

The partisans' conflict with these groups and Britain itself were both destructive and constructive. In this war over words, the violent efforts of America's inhabitants to defend their rights and status led to a new period of conceptual innovation. The Massachusetts lawyer John Adams argued that *the* 'Revolution' was in the 'Minds of the People' before the war.[12] That was perhaps too strong a statement, and one rebutted by historians who have acknowledged

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[11] Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995 [1953]), p. 21.

[12] John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 24 August 1815, in Charles Francis Adams, *The Works of John Adams*, vol. 10 (Boston, 1850-56), p. 182. This quote was included in Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, p. 160.

the war's importance in 'changing the causes, meaning, interpretation, and consequences of the Revolution.'[13] But the imperial crisis did lead to *a revolution*, a notable change, in the partisans' perception of themselves, others, and how they understood who belonged in the thirteen colonies. This transformation in rhetoric, when "American" took on a political importance that it had not done previously, took place after numerous attempts to make the colonists seem more British than Britons themselves, an effort that drew both praise and opprobrium in equal measure.

Patriot

The Partisans' Resurrection of "Patriot"

Derived from the Latin word *patria*, meaning "fatherland," the partisans revitalised the epithet "patriot" in order to show that they were defending the rights of all Britons. In the minds of many colonists, Virginia and Britain were from the same "country" – a "common country" – a Protestant, liberty-loving federation where all white Englishmen were considered as equals.[14] Therefore, an attack against one part of this federation – Virginia for instance – was seen in much of the thirteen colonies as an assault on the rights of all Britons. Despite the fact that "patriot" was underutilised in the Seven Years' War, Figure 2 shows that the tumult caused by the Stamp Act, enacted by Parliament on 1 November 1765, caused a rise in mentions of "patriot." The protestors argued that this Act was an attack on their ancient liberties. It had to be paid in gold and silver (the colonists having a shortage of specie and a surplus of paper money); and it was levied on stamped paper that many used (from playing cards and pamphlets to court documents and legal contracts).[15] In response to this seemingly unfair measure, the 'true-born Sons of Liberty', an elite and middling group, petitioned King George III to restore their rights as subjects.[16] As self-declared "patriots" defending the rights of British subjects everywhere, they contended that the weight of the English-speaking world was on their shoulders. Five months before the Act was implemented, the Virginian politician Patrick Henry resolved that any attempt to repeal the Assembly's 'sole exclusive Right & Power to lay

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[13] Robert G. Parkinson, 'War and the Imperative of Union', *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (October 2011, p. 634.

[14] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 170-171.

[15] Andrew David Edwards, 'Grenville's Silver Hammer: The Problem of Money in the Stamp Act Crisis', *Journal of American History* 104, no. 2 (September 2017), pp. 337-362.

[16] *Copies and extracts of several newspapers printed in New England, in the Months of September, October, and November 1765* (Boston, 1765).

Taxes…has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.'[17] Henry denounced anyone who opposed these resolves as 'an enemy to his majesty's colony.'[18] And an enemy to one's colony was also an enemy of the British Empire as a whole. Most Virginians agreed with Henry. To prove their "patriotism," Virginians raised liberty poles, burnt effigies of parliamentarians responsible for the Act (like that of Grenville), and humiliated disaffected persons (like George Mercer) into submission.[19]

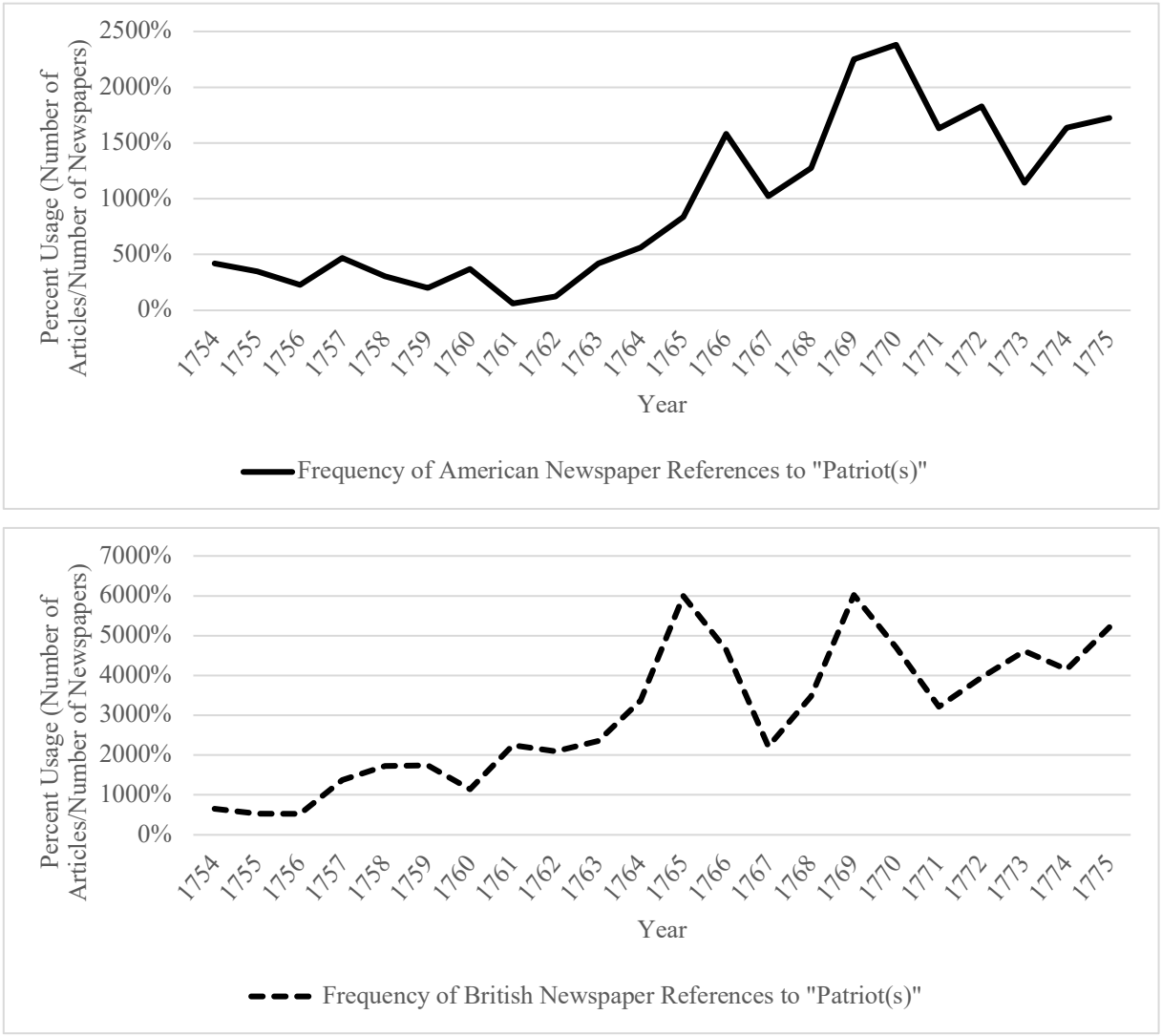

Figure 2: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Patriots," 1754-1775.

[17] 'Patrick Henry's Speech Introducing the Stamp Act Resolves', 30 May 1765, Samuel Eliot Morison, *Sources and Documents illustrating the American Revolution 1764-1788 and the formation of the Federal Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 18.

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] Benjamin H Irvin, 'Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768-1776', *New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 197-238.

Since both Virginia and Britain were defined as a common "country," the partisans argued that their fellow colonists could only become "patriots" if they showed that they were prepared to defend their colony's rights against slavery to the death. Slavery was defined by the complete dependence of one person on another.[20] Since there were 180,000 enslaved persons in Virginia, the colonists witnessed this dependent relationship daily.[21] After all, the Old Dominion was a slave society where, as Ira Berlin makes clear, the master-slave relationship became the 'model for all social relations.'[22] Determined not to end up in a similar state, the white partisans' argued that, if the community's liberties were threatened, the true "patriot" must stand firm and fight. This is not to say that Bostonians or Philadelphians did not use similar language – they did – but that the vocabulary of slavery carried wider valences for Virginians who often equated dependence with enslavement.[23] In a tavern, one group of merchants told their Irish drinking companion that they would be 'Damning their souls if they would pay [the Stamp tax] and Damn them but they would fight to the last Drop of their blood before they would Consent to any such slavery.'[24]

This belligerent attitude, which, in a recurrent theme in the crisis, equated treachery with eternal damnation in hell, was also present on the streets of Norfolk in south-eastern Virginia. Two "Sons of Liberty," Matthew and John Phripp, accused the maritime pilot William Smith of informing on a local smuggler. After being tarred and feathered, Smith remembered he was placed 'upon a Ducking Stool', pelted with 'rotten Eggs and stone[s]', carried 'through every Street in Town', and 'thrown into the Water lashed fast to the ducking Stool with a Rope around my Neck, there to be drowned.'[25] He was charged and punished under the law of 'common-scold', a law directed at women who were a 'public nuisance to their neighbourhood'.[26] The crowd struck at the core of this man's identity: his sense of honour and manhood.[27] Because of their lack of merit, the Sons of Liberty declared that "unpatriotic" persons were no better than slavish cowards.

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20 Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 39.
21 Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 145.
22 Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 8.
23 See, for instance, James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and proved* (Boston, 1764), p. 9.
24 23 June 1765, in 'Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, II', *American Historical Review* 27, no. 1 (October 1921), p. 72. Rhys Isaac has shown that this "French traveller" was probably Irish in 'Lighting the Fuse of Revolution in Virginia, May 1765: Rereading the "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies"', *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (October 2011), p. 663.
25 William Smith to Jeremiah Morgan, 3 April 1766, in Reese, ed., *Francis Fauquier*, vol. 3, pp. 1351-1352.
26 William Blackstone, 'Of Offenses Against the Public Health, and the Public Police or Economy', in *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, <https://lonang.com/library/reference/blackstone-commentaries-law-england/bla-413/>, accessed 23 May 2017.
27 Smith, *American Honor*, p. 69.

As a result of the Sons' linkage of "patriotism" with opposition to slavery, the "patriot" was not just a defender of one's country but also the personal rights of its inhabitants. As was the case with Mercer, these debates regarding who was a true "patriot" took over Virginia's newspapers.[28] Opposition to the Act, which was especially burdensome to printers (who had to use stamped paper), politicised the press.[29] This point was especially clear after Colonel Charles Chiswell murdered the merchant Robert Routledge because of a conflict over unpaid debts (on Chiswell's part) on 3 June 1766. An affair of honour in a tavern became another cause célèbre after a jury of the Colonel's friends granted him bail. Confident given the growing number of newspapers in the colonies (up to around forty-two papers by independence), the *Gazette*'s new editors, Alexander Purdie and John Dixon, published numerous letters, which condemned Chiswell's friends as 'void of patriotism'.[30] 'Patriots, however, are alarmed on this occasion', a "lover of justice" declared in July 1766, 'foreigners are alarmed; the middle and lower ranks of men, who are acquainted with the particulars, are extremely alarmed.'[31] The writer argued that the homegrown crisis surrounding Chiswell posed a greater threat to the colony than the Stamp Act, which Parliament was forced to abolish on 18 March 1766. The news that the Speaker of the House of Burgesses, John Robinson, had lent out paper currency, which he was meant to destroy as treasurer, to his friends, together with the Chiswell affair were reminders of Virginia's internal corruption.[32] The gentry, far from worthy "patriots," had not covered themselves in glory. 'People in general say', continued the piece, 'that every true American justly detested the late intolerable Stamp Act…But now they apprehend that this partiality [Chiswell's bail] may be attended with still more dreadful consequences than even that detestable act of power could have been, because this must affect our lives, while that [the Stamp Act] could only affect our estates.'[33] Chiswell committed suicide whilst waiting in jail, but the affair highlighted larger issues about the 'liberty of the subject'.[34]

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[28] Roger P. Mellen, *The Origins of a Free Press in Prerevolutionary Virginia: Creating a Culture of Political Dissent* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), pp. 57-96.

[29] Carl Bridenbaugh, 'Violence and Virtue in Virginia, 1766: Or, the Importance of the Trivial', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 76 (1964), pp. 3-29.

[30] Will Slauter, 'The Rise of the Newspaper', in Richard R. John and Jonathan Silberstein-Loeb, eds., *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 38 ("forty-two"); 'Dikephilos', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 18 July 1766 ('void').

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] Emory G. Evans, *"Topping People": The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2009), p. 178.

[33] 'Dikephilos', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 18 July 1766.

[34] *Ibid*.

Performing "Patriotism"

In order to align their defense of British subjecthood with ideals of "patriotism," the partisans sought examples to inspire their neighbours. George Washington, then a young colonel, was not the example they pursued. Instead, their first source of inspiration was the former Prime Minister William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham. Pitt's support for the colonists' struggle against Parliament's taxation measures drew him scorn and supporters in equal measure. One pamphleteer sarcastically referred to him as the 'incorruptible patriot' who had 'so lately cloathed [himself] with power, and, perhaps, too recently throwing it up for their [the partisans'] service, under his banner.'[35] But Chatham also had his admirers in the colonies. In perhaps the first example of political buttons or badges in America, the colonists in Maryland, Massachusetts, and Virginia crafted a number of "No Stamp Act 1766" buttons (Figure 3) which were supposed to be worn on clothing. Similar in tone to the "No Stamp Act" teapots made in Derby, England, soon after the Act's repeal, the button featured a bust of Pitt on a rather coarse design, showing that the button may have been made in America.[36] This admiration for Pitt in the public sphere was matched in private. Virginians, including Henry Tucker, were glowing in their letters about the 'patriotic Commoner'.[37] But Tucker also singled out Charles Pratt, the 1st Earl Camden, for praise. Like Pitt, the protestors praised Camden for his opposition to the Stamp Act. Richard Henry Lee was so effusive in his praise that he wrote to the politician, proposing that a painting be completed to venerate 'the character of Lord Camden'.[38] 'I thought', Lee continued, 'you would not be displeased at this testimony of our esteem for the Patriot whose virtue has saved *our common Country*.'[39] In their "patriotic" fight to protect the colonists' rights as subjects, Lee saw no difference between his struggle and that of parliamentarians, such as Chatham and Camden, in the metropole.

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35 Anonymous, *The Constitutional Right of the Legislature of Great Britain, to Tax the British Colonies in America, Impartially Stated* (London, 1768), in Harry T. Dickinson, ed., *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution*, vol. 2 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), p. 79.

36 Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, 'Political Protest and the World of Goods', in Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 64-65.

37 Henry Tucker to St. George Tucker, 17 June 1774, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 40 T79), Box 2, Folder 9.

38 Richard Henry Lee to Earl of Camden, 20 June 1766, in Lee Family Papers, 1638-1867 (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, Mss1 L51 f).

39 *Ibid*. (emphasis added).

Figure 3: A "No Stamp Act" button, made in England or America. Source: Colonial Williamsburg.

The partisans singled out their friends in Britain for their "patriotism," partly, though, to highlight British enemies for a lack of "patriotic" merit. Since the colony had an oral-aural culture, Virginians regularly denounced these "unpatriotic" Britons through the prism of performance. John Brewer has shown that the statement "mock-patriotism" had grown increasingly frequent in the eighteenth century.[40] The growing popularity of masquerade balls in Britain and the empire increasingly led to politicians using the idiom of performance and "masks" in a political sense. The partisans merely borrowed this rhetoric and used it for new ends. Politicians were targeted for wearing a mask of "patriotism" that covered up their true intentions: undermining the colonists' liberties as British subjects. In the March 1771 issue of the *Virginia Gazette* there was a humorous report of a fake masquerade ball in London. The attacks against prominent politicians were scathing. The newspaper reported that Lord North, who had been Prime Minister for a little over a year, entered 'in a Spanish Habit; a most awkward, dismal, and ridiculous Figure.'[41] But the charge of "mock patriotism" was saved for others. The report noted in respect to the parliamentarian and solicitor general, Alexander Wedderburne, that 'He was Hung round with Labels, whereon were inscribed, "Gratitude, Friendship, Sincerity, Patriotism, Sense of Honour, &c." but it was observed [that] he wanted Sense of Shame to complete his Character.'[42] The former Chancellor of the Exchequer William

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[40] John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 109. For an example of "false patriot," see Thomas Gordon, *A Further Call For Vengeance Upon The South-Sea Plunderers; With A Caution Against False Patriots*, December 1720, in John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters; or Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious, and Other Important Subjects*, ed. by Ronald Hamowy (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995), pp. 39-40.

[41] 'Humorous Account of the late Masquerade', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 30 May 1771.

[42] *Ibid*.

Dowdeswell was also mocked for having 'a Coat out at the Elbows, which the poor tedious Patriot [had] endeavoured to patch up with a String of Motions.'[43] Colonial newspapers claimed that Londoners' attendance at these balls showed that they were so mired in luxury that they were incapable of controlling the empire effectively.[44] It was the partisans themselves who had shown that they were the true "patriots" working to defend their "common country" from its enemies. This "patriotic" sentiment was not based on a rising sense of "Americanness," therefore, but rather on a budding sense of Britishness – a yearning for an empire based on the rights of British subjects that now seemed lost to the protestors.

The Virginian partisans contrasted these Britons, who were merely acting the "patriot," with their own meritorious displays of true "patriotism." The wearing of homespun, a loosely woven material made of woollen or linen fabric, was a repudiation of the Townshend Duties in 1768, which imposed new levies on paint, lead, glass, and tea. Through homespun manufactures, the partisans hoped to stop America's dependence on goods from the metropole. Whilst the New England colonies had a tradition of spinning bees for the poor, the insistence on homespun in Virginia was only successful amongst the gentry, who sometimes had enslaved persons make their outfits.[45] In December 1769, the House of Burgesses invited the governor Lord Botetourt to a ball at Virginia's capital, Williamsburg. There, the planter Robert Wormeley Carter proudly wore a suit of homespun clothes made by an enslaved woman named Winey, who had purposefully made the outfit for that occasion.[46] The Virginians used these 'Homespun Balls', where the men were dressed in 'Virginia cloth' and the women in 'homespun gowns', to reinforce their right to rule as genteel oligarchs.[47] Landon Carter declared that homespun items of 'Virginia growth' had acted 'like an extinguisher to the extravagance and folly of the middle rank'.[48] 'With what pleasure', Carter continued, 'must the patriotic eye have sparkled lately to have seen nearly a whole court yard, warmly clad in the produce of their wives and daughters'.[49] In contrast to the gentry, the merchants who provided Carter and his fellow elites with European carriages, cutlery, and debt capital were scapegoated

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43 *Ibid*.
44 Van Horn, *Power of Objects* p. 266.
45 Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution*, p. 208.
46 Michael Zakim, 'Sartorial Ideologies: From Homespun to Ready-Made', *American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (December 2001), p. 1555 ("proudly"); Bruce A. Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia* (Madison, WI: Madison House Publishers, 1996), p. 84 ("Winey" and "purposefully").
47 *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 14 December 1769 ('Balls'); *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 14 December 1769 ('gowns').
48 Landon Carter to Alexander Purdie and John Dixon, 14 May 1769, Carter Family Papers, 1659-1797 (microfilm, VHS, Richmond), p. 1506.
49 *Ibid*.

as a source of dependence and thereby slavery. Virginia's interim governor William Nelson lectured the London trader John Norton that the merchants 'have already taught us to know that we can make many things for ourselves…I now wear a good suit of cloth of my son's wool, manufactured as well as my shirts…of our own country'.[50] These strident comments were much ado about nothing. Many merchants, such as the Massachusetts trader John Hancock, stood at the forefront of the colonial protest movement. But, in trying to deflect the public's attention from the Robinson scandal, the planter class increasingly contrasted their meritorious "patriotism" with corrupted merchants who had apparently instigated luxury in Virginia.[51]

The Religious Underpinnings of "Patriotism"

Dissenters to the established Church of England, particularly Separate Baptists, took these elite partisans' emphasis on virtuous "patriotism" to new heights.[52] The Baptists had faced vicious Anglican persecution since the revivals of the mid-eighteenth century, but the dissenters used the imperial crisis as an opportunity to redefine the partisans' notions of manly "patriotism."[53] They challenged Virginia's traditional ideals of gentlemanly masculinity, which were expressed through public acts of bravado, such as gambling, dancing, and horse racing.[54] Instead, the dissenters, who may have constituted 15 to 20 per cent of Virginia's population, emphasised 'contentiousness, combativeness, and martial language'.[55] The tutor Philip Vickers Fithian noted in his diary in March 1774 that the '*Anabaptists* in *Louden County* [Virginia]' were 'destroying pleasure in the Country', and banished '*Gaming, Dancing,* & Sabbath-Day Diversions'.[56] This masculine language was heightened following the passing of the Quebec Act by Britain in 1774, which permitted French-Canadian Catholics to practice their religion. Canada was many miles away, but colonial Protestants feared the threat of "popish" despotism

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[50] William Nelson to John Norton, 24 January 1770, in 'Nelson Letter Book', *William and Mary Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (July 1898), p. 26.

[51] Sarah Knott argues that this anti-merchant language was similar to the rhetoric used in a "class war." (Knott, *Sensibility*, p. 49.)

[52] For Baptist beliefs, particularly the Separate Baptists, see Janet Moore Lindman, *Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 48.

[53] John A. Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 53.

[54] Janet Moore Lindman, 'Acting the Manly Christian: White Evangelical Masculinity in Revolutionary Virginia', *William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (April 2000), p. 394.

[55] *Ibid*., p. 397.

[56] 6 March 1774, in Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Williamsburg: University of Virginia Press, 1978), pp. 72-73.

to religious freedom on the continent. Virginians denounced the king's ministers as 'Popish Knaves' intent on subjecting 'free born men' to 'Popish law, Because they freedom claim.'[57] Both civil and religious liberty upheld the rights of Englishmen and without one, these Virginians felt the other must fall. '[T]he Idea of loosing civil or religious Liberty at one Stroke', a gentleman from Henrico County wrote in November 1774, 'has raised such an enthusiastick spirit of Love of both as cannot be extinguished but with Life itself.'[58] The writer knew about the Protestant dissenters, who had fled England for North America in the seventeenth century to practice their religion free of state persecution. He would not allow history to repeat itself. The Henrico man declared 'there is no widow among us who would not put the sword into the Hand of her only Son to fight [for] the Cause of God and our Country.'[59] The dissenters established new criteria for "patriotism": merit and Christian virtuosity, rather than gentility, separated true and false "patriots."[60]

The dissenters' intertwining of religious and political "patriotism" was further amplified in the public prints. These prints, both from the same year, 1774, had religious inflections that placed "patriotism" next to godliness as a virtue. 'The Character of an American Patriot', as one newspaper declared, was not formed out of 'love of money' or 'distinctions of title, birth, and fortune'.[61] "Patriotism" was owed to those persons with 'distinguished merit', particularly colonists who served 'the divine glory, and the universal happiness of mankind'.[62] Owing these religious inflections to "patriot," the prints focused on individuals at the point of death. This genre, known as the "ars moriendi," or the art of death, emphasised the importance of living a pious existence as preparation for eternal life in Heaven.[63] Almanacs, which were more widely read than newspapers and books, and contained short statements on ideal social behaviour, displayed the "patriots'" fate.[64] In Figure 4, 'the virtuous PATRIOT' lays on his deathbed with his family knelt at his bedside at the 'Hour of Death', whilst an angel opened the clouds to reveal the light of Heaven.[65] 'Prayers and Tears th' PATRIOT's Life could save',

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57 *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 12 January 1775.
58 Thomas Adams to Thomas Hill, November 1774, in 'Letters and Other Papers, 1735-1829', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 23, no. 2 (April 1915), p. 178.
59 *Ibid*.
60 Lindman, 'Manly Christian', p. 414.
61 *The Royal American magazine, or Universal repository of instruction and amusement* (Boston, 1774-1775), p. 44.
62 *Ibid*.
63 Susan Juster, *Sacred Violence in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p. 203.
64 Mellen, *Origins of a Free Press*, p. 97 ("widely read") and 105 ("ideal").
65 Nathanael Low, *An astronomical diary: or, almanack for the year of Christian aera, 1775* (Boston, 1774), frontispiece.

the print read, 'but usurping Villains Death would have.'[66] The second print, shown in Figure 5, had an altogether different tone. Thomas Hutchinson, the royal governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony, was vilified in the press after a number of his letters (detailing his plans to strengthen executive powers) were published in colonial newspapers.[67] As a result of Hutchinson's actions, his dutiful family were nowhere to be seen in Paul Revere's cartoon. The Boston silversmith made sure 'The Wicked Statesman, or the Traitor to his County' had a different companion at the 'Hour of [his] DEATH.'[68] The Devil read a list of the governor's crimes as hellish creatures passed judgment. On his desk lay an exorbitant salary of £1500 and the works of the sixteenth century Florentine diplomat and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, who was famed for his deceitful (or "Machiavellian") approach to politics and diplomacy. The message was simple: join the "patriotic" cause against Britain or suffer eternal damnation in hell.

Figure 4: The frontispiece of Nathanael Low's published *Astronomical Diary; Or, Almanack For the Year of Christian Aera, 1775* (Boston, 1774). Source: Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

66 *Ibid*.

67 Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 227-228.

68 Ezra Gleason, *Massachusetts Calendar; or An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord Christ 1774* (Boston, 1774), frontispiece.

Figure 5: Paul Revere's engraving for the cover of Ezra Gleason's *Massachusetts Calendar; or An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord Christ 1774* (Boston, 1774). Source: Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

The Efforts of Marginalised Peoples to Appropriate "Patriot"

In emphasising their "patriotism," a status which depended on active support for one's country, the partisans also provided marginalised peoples with an avenue to social inclusion. Many white women vigorously contested the male partisans' definition of "patriotism."[69] Surely, some argued, the spinning of homespun or the assistance of one's poorer neighbours was as sure a sign of active "patriotism" as tarring and feathering a suspected traitor. They had a point. Though little evidence exists of such opposition in Virginia, the Quaker poet Milcah Martha Moore felt that the "Daughters of Liberty" were more than worthy counterparts to the "Sons" in showing their "patriotism" to both Britain and their home colony. In her 1768 address to the 'female Patriots' and 'Daughters of Liberty in America', she mocked the "sons" and their claims to "patriotism."[70] These "men," she wrote, were 'from a party or fear of a frown, Are kept by a sugar-plum quietly down'.[71] 'If the sons' remained 'so degenerate', she argued, 'Let the Daughters of Liberty nobly arise'.[72] These "Daughters" displayed their virtue through the production of homespun. The Massachusetts Daughters may have exemplified their "patriotism" through homespun because the Bible had defined a 'virtuous woman', in part, as someone who spun flax and worked 'willingly with her hands'.[73] The word "willingly" was

69 Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, p. 120.
70 'The Female Patriots, Address'd to the Daughters of Liberty in America, 1768', *William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (April 1977), p. 307.
71 *Ibid*.
72 *Ibid*.
73 Ulrich, *Age of Homespun*, p. 93.

important. Some newspapers started to recognise that women also wanted to be "patriots." 'One day last week a number of patriot Ladies met at the house of John Gore [in Boston]', read a newspaper article published in 1770, '[…] where their industry at the spinning wheel was at most equal to any instance recorded in our papers.'[74] 'America's genius', the report continued, 'presents his compliments to the Ladies of Boston, Charlestown, and Virginia, who have distinguished themselves in the important cause of liberty'.[75] Rather than merely acting for the partisans, then, or borrowing their rhetoric, these spinners showed that "patriotism" was a woman's virtue.

Black persons also confronted entrenched prejudices when they claimed to be deserving "patriots." The theory of environmental degeneracy, popular amongst whites in the thirteen colonies, stated that enslaved black persons had been degraded by their enslavement.[76] The result of this degradation, a 'True Patriot' wrote in the *Virginia Gazette*, was that the enslaved had not 'one spark of sterling patriotic fire'.[77] There is no evidence of African-descended peoples in Virginia using "patriot" in the imperial crisis. But Phillis Wheatley, a Bostonian poet and enslaved woman, showed that black persons understood the ideal of "patriotism" and the actions for which it stood. The documents she and others produced were widely read in Virginia.[78] Born in West Africa, likely Senegal or Gambia, Wheatley, who was taught to read and write, was herself an example of black improvement and a symbol of the baseless accusation that enslaved people were degenerated by their condition. Published in 1773 and read throughout the thirteen colonies, her poem addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth – part of the first book of poems written by a black person in America – proved her knowledge of the virtues that crowned a true "patriot." 'May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give To all thy works', she declared, 'and thou for ever live Not only on the wings of fleeting Fame, Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name'.[79] Francis Williams from Jamaica went further. Born to a free black couple, he also attacked the theory that black persons were incapable of being improved. One of his poems was included in

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74 'Extract of a letter from London, December 1769', *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 5 April 1770.
75 *Ibid*.
76 Nicholas Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 24-25.
77 'To the True Patriot', in *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), 1 June 1775.
78 David Waldstreicher, 'Ancients, Moderns, and Africans: Phillis Wheatley and the Politics of Empire and Slavery in the American Revolution', *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2017), pp. 727-729. The importance of the imperial crisis as a moment when the colonists had to respond to the literature and politics of enslaved persons can be found in *idem*., 'The Wheatleyan Moment', *Early American Studies* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2011), pp. 522-551.
79 Phillis Wheatley, 'To the Right Hon. William, Earl of Dartmouth', in *idem*., *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (Boston, 1773), p. 75.

Edward Long's widely read 1774 *History of Jamaica*. The poem read: 'Of genius, burning with desire to *know*; And learned speech, with modest accent worn, Shall best the sooty *African* adorn. An heart with wisdom fraught, a patriot flame, A love of virtue; these shall lift his name Conspicuous, far beyond his kindred race'.[80] Like Wheatley, Williams argued that education and refinement could uplift blacks. Though Long was an avowed racist, Williams's poem forced him to agree with a proverbial Spanish saying: 'though we are Blacks, we are men.'[81] That was no small victory at a time when the right of someone to freedom was defined through masculine, "patriotic" resistance to tyranny.[82]

Virginian Critiques and Criticisms of the Partisans as "Patriots"

Whilst the partisans' claims to "patriotism" allowed marginalised peoples to expose the contradictions in colonial society, the protestors also painted a target from their political opponents within and without Virginia. For those who subscribed to a more genteel ideal of "patriotism," synonymous with Roman heroes, such as Cincinnatus, the partisans were not showing the disinterested and noble conduct required to call oneself a "patriot." Landon Carter, a partisan who had been so effusive in his praise of homespun, drew distinctions between his ideal of elite "patriotism" and how that term had expanded too far in meaning. 'I have never engaged in any of the mock patriotick clamours', he wrote to a friend (with a degree of insincerity).[83] Rather, he had 'long judged of the modern Patriots in the manner they deserve…Ambition & avarice, in a great measure, actuate mankind…[and] I think in my *long life*, I have found the majority actuated by one or the other.'[84] Carter's argument against "modern patriotism" was effective because many of the most ardent partisans, including the physician Arthur Lee, had appealed to Roman history for their claims of "patriotism." Due to the immense popularity of plays such as Joseph Addison's *Cato*, the Roman example had almost become a common language amongst Virginia's elites.[85] Lee had entreated the colonists

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[80] Francis Williams, 'An Ode to George Haldane, the Governor of the Island of Jamaica', in Edward Long, *The history of Jamaica or, General survey of the antient and modern state of the island*, vol. 2 (London, 1774), p. 483.

[81] *Ibid*., p. 484.

[82] François Furstenberg, 'Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse', *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (March 2003), pp. 1296-1297.

[83] Landon Carter to "Dear Sir," unknown date in the 1770s, Carter Family Papers, 1659-1797 (microfilm, VHS, Richmond), p. 1522.

[84] *Ibid*.

[85] Frederic M. Litto, 'Addison's Cato in the Colonies', *William and Mary Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (July 1966), pp. 436-437. The first performance of *Cato* in Williamsburg was in 1736. For a more recent treatment of the

to remember their classical heroes. 'Let them study well the godlike actions of those heroes and patriots', he wrote in 1769, '[…] Godlike resolve, patriot approved!'[86] Lee finished: '*Thy life is not thy own when* Rome *demands it*.'[87] For the disaffected, however, Rome was not the example they saw being emulated. Virginia's former attorney general, John Randolph, believed that the protestor's opposition to the 'mixed Principles of Obedience and Freedom' in the constitution was similar to the 'giddy Multitude' more than a century earlier in 1676.[88] That year, after the then-governor William Berkeley refused to sanction an unrestrained war against the Pamunkey Indians, the English landholder Nathaniel Bacon led a combined force of indentured servants, African-descended peoples, and other colonists who destroyed Jamestown, Virginia's former capital.[89] 'The fluctuating State of patriotism must be known to everyone who has looked, in the slightest Manner, into Events of this Kind', wrote Randolph.[90] 'The Minion is idolized to-day; tomorrow he may be execrated.'[91] Randolph knew his history, and a level of destruction seen more than a century earlier in Virginia again seemed to be on the horizon.

Alongside their emphasis on modern "patriotism," many disaffected persons argued that the partisans' lack of comportment extended to their religious sensibilities. In June 1768, the Bostonian merchant Charles Steuart wrote to his friend, the merchant James Parker, in Virginia about these 'obnoxious people'.[92] They raised a liberty pole, assembled a crowd of over '2000 people', and forced the customs house to seek safety behind the walls of a fort.[93] Three months later, he wrote that he had been forced to use a female acquaintance 'for protection' around town because of the actions of the 'deluded people' of Boston.[94] The terms "delusion" and "enthusiasm," common in this period, had religious connotations. The word "enthusiasm" was used for persons who based their actions on revelatory communications that

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reception of *Cato*, see Katherine Harper, 'Cato, Roman Stoicism, and the American "Revolution"' (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2013).

86 Arthur Lee, *The Farmer's and Monitor's Letters, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (Williamsburg, 1769), pp. 67-68.

87 *Ibid*., p. 68.

88 John Randolph, 'Considerations on the Present State of Virginia', 1774, in Earl Gregg Swem, ed., *Virginia and the Revolution: Two Pamphlets, 1774* (New York, 1919), p. 15.

89 James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 95-96.

90 Randolph, 'Considerations', 1774, in Swem, ed., *Virginia and the Revolution*, p. 17.

91 *Ibid*.

92 Charles Steuart to James Parker, 15 June 1768, Parker Family Papers (Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool, United Kingdom, 920 PAR 1), Volume 27, Item 18.

93 *Ibid*.

94 Charles Steuart to James Parker, Boston, 9 October 1768, in *Ibid*., Item 21.

they imagined had come from God.[95] This was a stinging criticism given that the partisans had placed "patriotism" next to godliness in importance. Possibly aware of the Baptist challenge to popular definitions of masculinity, the prominent Virginian educator James Maury argued there was a growing threat of enthusiasm in the colonies. He wrote to his friend, the England-born Maryland preacher Jonathan Boucher, to warn him of the rising tide of "Anabaptism," a term synonymous with nonconformity and radicalism in all realms. 'When my last [letter] to you was dated', Maury noted just before his death in March 1769, '[…] I informed you I was writing something to antidote the ignorant and teachable Part of our People against the Poison of the Doctrine of those Enthusiastic Preachers, called Anabaptists.'[96] Boucher acknowledged this threat to Virginia's religious and political order. 'Whatever the Confessionalists aim might be', Boucher lamented to a friend in 1770, 'Theirs is not for lopping pruning; but, evidently, for your Root & Branch work.'[97] Whatever its shortcomings, he prayed that God would 'defend this our established Church, which…is the Glory of ye. Reformation.'[98] Without the Church of England, Boucher and others feared that religious fanaticism, on the magnitude of the Reformations in Europe, would appear in North America.

Virginia's mercantile class also denounced the partisans for calling themselves "patriots" without acting like persons worthy of the title. It was ironic that landholding Virginians, who held the same amount of debt as the other twelve colonies combined (over one million pounds sterling), were preaching frugality.[99] Indeed, some Virginian planters were so indebted that they carried pistols to protect themselves from debt-seeking sheriffs.[100] In contrast to this corruption, one merchant argued that improving trade was as much a sign of true "patriotism" as actively fighting against an enemy. The Virginian merchant, John Gell, characterised the British as a 'commercial people'.[101] If 'all [political] parties are detrimental to commerce', he argued, merchants had no interest in making indebted farmers their dependents.[102] Gell had drawn on the English jurist William Blackstone's comment that Britain

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[95] Douglas L. Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Press, 2017), p. 213.

[96] "Anabaptism" was often associated with the Munster rebellion from February 1534 until June 1535. Led by John of Leiden, the "Anabaptists" (according to their detractors) aimed to create a polygamous theocracy. For "Anabaptist" as an epithet, see Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church: A Study in the Origins of Sectarian Protestantism* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1958), pp. xv-xvi.

[97] Jonathan Boucher to John James, 25 August 1770, in Jonathan Boucher Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, Mss 93 B66), Folder 5, Item 22.

[98] *Ibid*.

[99] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 27.

[100] John M. Hemphill II, ed., 'John Wayles Rates His Neighbours', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 66, no. 3 (July 1958), p. 306

[101] Captain John Gell to James Parker, 19 April 1770, in Parker Papers (LRO, 920 PAR 1), Vol. 3, Item 2.

[102] *Ibid*.

was 'a nation of freemen, a polite and commercial people'.[103] No self-respecting Briton encouraged the extrajudicial tarring and feathering of traitors. James Parker had similar thoughts. He had helped draft Norfolk's 'Resolutions of the Sons of Liberty' on 31 March 1766, but the nonimportation acts that the partisans introduced following the Townshend Duties three years later started to break his resolve.[104] He went through the new laws and marked with a cross those who benefitted economically by these policies, including the then-Colonel George Washington.[105] The closure of the debtor courts in 1774, the burning of tea, the constant persecution of British soldiers sent to stop the violence, and the arming of common people throughout the country convinced him that the partisans had gone too far.[106] The protest movement seemed to be a debtor plot to evade their obligations. 'Our patriots do not cool fast', he wrote to Charles Steuart in 1775, 'many of them have all at stake, upon the restoration of justice they will be obliged to pay their debts and sink into oblivion.'[107] That was not the end of the violence. He reported to Steuart that a 'mob [had] assembled' outside a woman's house where she 'was delivered of a Child, they gathered round the house and erected a Gallows opposite her chamber window'.[108] There was no mention of what happened to this persecuted woman. But this incident occurred in a period when audiences gauged a society's standards of civility through their treatment of women.[109] In Parker's eyes, this action against a pregnant woman was further proof that the "Sons of Liberty" had degenerated into the sons of violence.

British Critiques of the Partisans as "Patriots"

These local criticisms of the partisans – that the protestors were calling themselves "patriots" without acting the part – were shared beyond the thirteen colonies in Britain. The English lexicographer, Samuel Johnson, argued that the only people worthy of calling themselves "patriots" were those individuals who, in loving their country, were not prepared to use that

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[103] Blackstone, 'Of the Several Species of Trial', in *Commentaries*, <https://lonang.com/library/reference/blackstone-commentaries-law-england/bla-322/>, accessed 18 December 2018.

[104] Resolutions of the Sons of Liberty of the Borough and the County of Norfolk in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 31 March 1766, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 1, p. 47 ('Resolutions'); Keith Mason, 'A Loyalist's Journey: James Parker's Response to the Revolutionary Crisis', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102, no. 2 (April 1994), p. 157 ("resolve").

[105] Nonimportation Acts, 1769, in Parker Papers (LRO, 920 PAR 1), Item 4.

[106] James Parker to Charles Steuart, 7 September 1774, in William Abbatt, ed., 'Letters from Virginia, 1774-1781', *The Magazine of History with Notes and Queries* (1906), p. 155.

[107] James Parker to Charles Steuart, c. February 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 158.

[108] *Ibid*.

[109] Hoock, *Scars of Independence*, p. 43.

ideal for their own deceitful purposes. Johnson is perhaps best known for his line, reported in James Boswell's biography, that 'Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel', a person destitute of morals.[110] He was not opposed to "patriotism" in principle. Johnson subscribed to the ideal of genteel "patriotism." In his *Dictionary*, a large number of the quotations that concerned the meaning of a 'firm patriot' were derived from Addison's *Cato*. Johnson was opposed to the overuse of the term – shown in Figure 2 – for political benefit. As noted in his *Dictionary*, he only wanted to 'put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition.'[111] Johnson thought there were three sources for these "alterations." The first was William Pitt, whom Johnson suspected was only using "patriot" to gain popularity.[112] The second was John Wilkes, elected as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Middlesex in 1768. Wilkes took a similar approach to the partisans on the subject of "patriotism." According to Kathleen Wilson, he 'defined the true patriot as the austere, forceful and independent masculine subject who would resist…the illegitimate powers that threatened to overtake the polity'.[113] The third source of corruption, Johnson thought, was the partisans. 'A PATRIOT', Johnson noted in 1774, 'is he whose public conduct is regulated by one single motive, the love of his country; who, as an agent in parliament, has for himself neither hope nor fear, neither kindness nor resentment, but refers everything to the common interest.'[114] He then extended his criticisms of their "public conduct" to claim that the protestors were propagandists. 'Still less does the true Patriot circulate opinions which he knows to be false', he argued. 'No man, who loves his country, fills the nation with clamorous complaints, that the Protestant religion is in danger, because *Popery is established in the extensive province of Quebec*'.[115] He believed that the partisans had shown by their actions and words that they were the complete opposite of meritorious "patriots." Instead, he declared, they were traitors in "patriotic" disguise.

One year after these comments, Johnson took his criticisms of the partisans' comportment even further: rather than "patriots," Samuel Johnson referred to them as the

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[110] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. by Christopher Hibbert (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 182.
[111] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated in their different significations by examples from the best writers to which are prefixed, history of the language, and an English grammar*, vol. 1 (London, 1755), preface.
[112] Brewer, *Party Ideology*, p. 111.
[113] Wilson, *The sense of the people*, p. 219.
[114] Samuel Johnson, 'The Patriot; Addressed to the Electors of Great Britain', 1774, in *idem*., *Political Tracts* (London, 1776), p. 146.
[115] *Ibid*., p. 152.

'drivers of negroes'.[116] In keeping with other writers, he contended that America's colonisers had been changed by their involvement in slavery and colonisation – two processes that, he noted, have been 'hitherto disastrous to mankind'.[117] Far from British subjects, the colonists were 'English barbarians' – a deformed version of liberty-loving Britons.[118] The colonists' "barbarities" against enslaved people shocked travellers to Virginia. 'Their authority over their slaves renders them vain and imperious', the Reverend Andrew Burnaby wrote in 1759, 'and entire strangers to that elegance of sentiment, which is so peculiarly characteristic of refined and polished nations.'[119] The political economist and philosopher Adam Smith even compared slaveholders to criminals.[120] The case of James Somerset, an enslaved man brought from Boston to Britain, had only emboldened these ardent critics of the slave trade. On 22 June 1772, the presiding judge, Lord Mansfield, declared slavery was 'incapable of being introduced [in Britain] on any reasons, moral or political, but only by positive law'.[121] Somerset was freed. The activist Granville Sharp, who briefed Somerset's lawyers ahead of the case, was ecstatic. Sharp argued that, given the fact that America was a land of slavery and Britain one of liberty, the partisans had no claim to the language of British liberty or "patriotism."[122]

Some partisans recognised these contradictions between slaveholding and virtuous "patriotism." But Virginians, even those who were opposed to plantation slavery, were often prepared to explain the paradox of "patriotism" away by blaming Britons for slavery and not white peoples' own desire for enslaved labour. They implied that those who supplied, not demanded, enslaved persons were the real culprits for the institution of slavery. 'For neither do they consent to be our Slaves, nor do we purchase them of their Conquerors', wrote Arthur Lee.[123] 'The British merchants obtain them from Africa by violence, artifice & treachery, with a few trinkets to prompt those unfortunate & detestable people to enslave one another by force

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[116] Samuel Johnson, 'Taxation no Tyranny; An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress', 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 262.
[117] *Ibid*., p. 193.
[118] Clement Hawes, 'Johnson and imperialism', in Greg Clingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 120.
[119] 'Burnaby's View of the Situation in Virginia', 1759, in 'Travelers' Impressions of Slavery in America from 1750 to 1800', *Journal of Negro History* 1, no. 4 (October 1916), p. 399.
[120] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 242.
[121] 'The Case of James Somerset', 22 June 1772, in *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanours from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, vol. 20 (London, 1816), p. 81.
[122] Christopher L. Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 114-115.
[123] Richard K. MacMaster, ed., 'Arthur Lee's "Address on Slavery": An Aspect of Virginia's Struggle to End the Slave Trade, 1765-1774', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80, no. 2 (April 1972), p. 154.

or Strategem.'[124] Many Virginians' emphasis on the crimes of white merchants and the captivity of prisoners of war in African conflicts became a helpful way for slavers, who invoked conquerors' rights to purchase enslaved black persons from African princes, to legalise their ownership of other human beings.[125] There were political figures in other colonies, however, who tackled the issue of "patriotism" head on. The Pennsylvania abolitionist Benjamin Rush, who had been in correspondence with Sharp, recognised that the contradiction between virtuous "patriotism" and plantation slavery had to be reconciled. 'Where is the difference between the British Senator who attempts to enslave his fellow subjects, in America', Rush wrote, '[…] and the American Patriot who reduces his African Brethren to Slavery, contrary to Justice and Humanity?'[126] He characterised the 'firm patriot' as someone who had an interest in the 'welfare of mankind', whatever their skin colour.[127] These contrasting visions of what "patriot" meant allowed it to become a weapon for the partisans, who manipulated this term to exclude America's inhabitants along lines of race, class, and gender from claiming their positions as truly meritorious Britons.

White people

The Resurgence of "White People" in the Imperial Crisis

Despite Benjamin Rush's ideal of a more inclusive "patriotism," the majority of partisans argued that the only trustworthy British subject was a "white person." Figure 6 does not show a surge in usage of that term. The changes in "white people" were more gradual. That label had become popular amongst colonists fighting in the Seven Years' War and against the Northwest Indians in Pontiac's war. However, the protestors transformed this term in the imperial crisis in order to align their cause with that of Britain and reclaim their privileged place in the Empire which seemed to be threatened by Britain's attempts, following the war against France, to expand subjecthood to indigenous peoples and French Canadian Catholics. This expansion in British subjecthood, which has not been examined as it relates to discourses of whiteness, had

[124] *Ibid*., pp. 154-155.
[125] Jeffrey Glover, 'Witnessing African War: Slavery, the Laws of War, and Anglo-American Abolitionism', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017), pp. 503-532.
[126] Benjamin Rush, *An address to the inhabitants of the British settlements, on the subject of the Negroes in America* (Philadelphia, 1773), p. 30.
[127] Benjamin Rush to Granville Sharp, 20 September 1774, in John A. Woods., ed., 'The Correspondence of Benjamin Rush and Granville Sharp 1773-1809', *Journal of American Studies* 1, no. 1 (April 1967), p. 12.

profound consequences for European-indigenous relations during the crisis.[128] After the Proclamation of 1763, which forbade all settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, many colonists argued that indigenous peoples had received preferential treatment from Britain.[129] The "Paxton Boys," a group of colonists infamous for murdering 20 Susquehannock Indians at Conestoga in western Pennsylvania, argued that indigenous peoples were not true British subjects.[130] The Conestoga Indians wore English clothes, went by English names, and lived under the protection of the Pennsylvania governor. But, as Colin Calloway argues, the 'Paxton men…saw only Indians.'[131] In January 1764, five hundred of the "Boys" marched on Philadelphia and presented a "Declaration of Injured Frontier Inhabitants." They professed their status as 'loyal Subjects to the best of Kings…And of Consequence equally opposite to the Enemies of his Throne and Dignity, whether openly avowed or more dangerously concealed under a Mask of falsly pretended Friendship, and cheerfully willing to offer our Substance and Lives in his Cause.'[132] They denounced the Quaker politicians in Philadelphia who, they feared, had provided Indians with 'a Rod to scourge the white People that were settled on the purchased Lands'.[133] These men thought that the only good British subject was a "white" one.

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[128] For histories of whiteness, which do not examine the importance of Britain's attempts to restructure subjecthood, see Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008); and Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[129] Samuel Fisher, 'Fit Instruments in a Howling Wilderness: Colonists, Indians, and the Origins of the American Revolution', *William and Mary* Quarterly 73, no. 4 (October 2016), pp. 660-661.

[130] The meaning of "Paxton Boys," which was itself an epithet that was devised by Pennsylvania's elites and appropriated by these colonists, is explored in Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, p. 349.

[131] Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 78-79.

[132] *A Declaration and Remonstrance Of the distressed and bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1764), p. 3.

[133] *Declaration and Remonstrance*, p. 8.

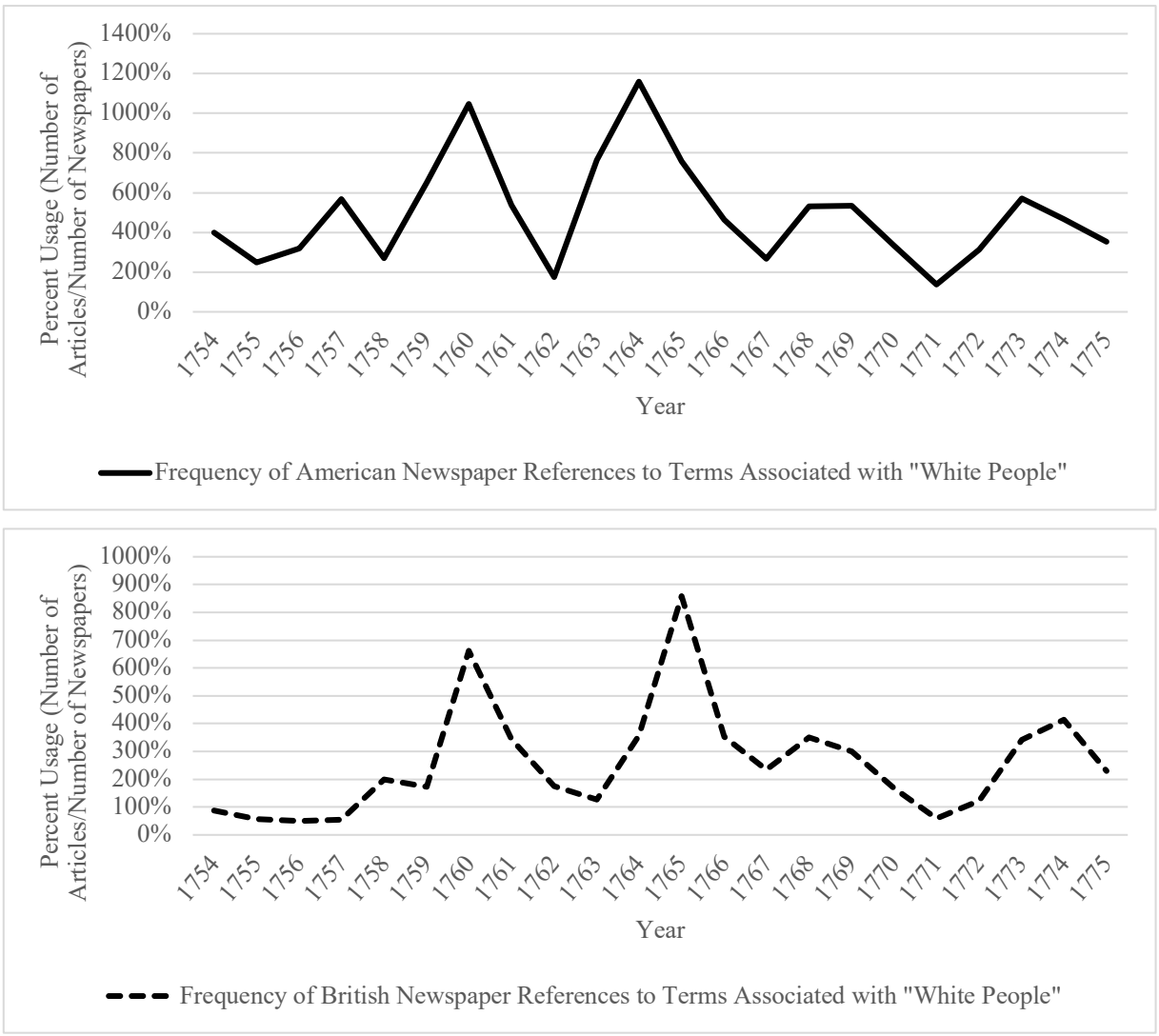

Figure 6: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to Terms Associated with "White People" (Such as "White people," "white person," "white man," "white men," "white woman," and "white women"), 1754-1775.

The Pennsylvanians' association of subjecthood with "whiteness" was held from Massachusetts down to Virginia. These ideas were especially present in the writings of James Otis, the Massachusetts-born opponent of African slavery.[134] In 1764, he declared that the thirteen mainland British colonies were – as opposed to the six colonies in the Caribbean – 'well settled, not as the common people of *England* foolishly imagine, with a compound mongrel mixture of *English*, *Indian* and *Negro*, but with freeborn *British white subjects*, whose

[134] For Otis's political thought, see James R. Ferguson, 'Reason in Madness: The Political Thought of James Otis', *William and Mary Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (April 1979), pp. 194-214; and T. H. Breen, 'Subjecthood and Citizenship: The Context of James Otis's Radical Critique of John Locke', *New England Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (September 1998), pp. 378-403.

loyalty has never yet been suspected.'[135] This comment was a rejection of theories, propagated by Samuel Johnson and others, that the colonists were a degraded people because of their association with colonialism and slavery. But it was also a rebuttal to claims of racial mixing: that "white people" – the colonists – had become tainted through their interactions and encounters with native peoples and free and enslaved black persons. These criticisms explained why Otis 'define[d] the *modern* Colonists' as the '*noble discoverers and settlers of a new world*; from whence as from an endless source, *wealth*, and *plenty*, the means of *power, grandeur* and *glory*...have been pouring into *Europe* for 300 years past'.[136] The colonists and black persons may have been British subjects, but Otis did not extend that title to indigenous peoples.[137]

Virginians also adopted this exclusionary view of British subjecthood. On 4 June 1765, the "Augusta Boys" resolved: 'We…in heart are and do profess ourselves his present Majesty's…true and liege Subjects'.[138] They were frustrated with the 'unparal[l]ed deceit of an Insidious and Cruel Heathen Enemy…and find it Impracticable to maintain the legal Rights granted us by his Majesty'.[139] To reclaim their legal rights as subjects, these Virginians used force. Ten days after this proclamation, the governor Francis Fauquier informed his superiors on the Board of Trade, which administered Britain's North American colonies, that these vigilantes were 'strong enough to rescue any of their Party who may be apprehended…for they say no man shall suffer for the murder of a Savage.'[140] The ideas that underpinned these Augusta residents were very similar to their Pennsylvanian brethren. In arguing for a regulation of the frontier, they declared that they found 'it Impracticable to maintain the legal rights granted us by his Majesty.'[141] The only recourse to justice, they declared, was violence.[142] The colonists, whether in Pennsylvania or Virginia, had dismissed the notion of equal rights subjecthood for both Indians and "white" colonists.

Indigenous and British Critiques of "White People"

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[135] Otis, *Rights of the British Colonies*, p. 24.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[137] The Massachusetts lawyer John Adams seems to have taken these opinions further. He was said to have 'shuddered' when Otis argued that both black and "white" persons were subjects. (Smith, *Civic Ideals*, p. 73.)
[138] 'Proclamation of the Augusta Boys', 4 June 1765, in Reese, ed., *Francis Fauquier*, vol. 3, p. 1255.
[139] *Ibid*.
[140] Francis Fauquier to the Board of Trade, 14 June 1765, in *Ibid*., p. 1257.
[141] *Ibid*.
[142] Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 185.

Whilst the colonists had transformed the meaning of "white person," native peoples' use of that epithet was characterised more by continuity than change. The label was popularised amongst many indigenous peoples as a term synonymous for "white peoples'" treachery and violence. Originally, as Nancy Shoemaker has shown, there were both positive and negative inflections to "white" and these definitions changed in different places and amongst particular Indian nations.[143] For the Lenape in western Pennsylvania, the term *shwonnaks,* or "whites," was derived from the word *shuwanakw*, meaning "sour."[144] However, for the Muscogee in the Carolinas, "white" was a peaceful term and "red" a sign of war.[145] This state of affairs started to change with the Lenape prophet Neolin. Inspired by a vision of the Master of Life, the creator of both the colonists and native peoples, Neolin identified "white people" as the source of the Indians' ills. He prohibited Indians from trading with Europeans, using guns, drinking alcohol, and engaging in polygamous marriages.[146] Neolin encouraged his fellow Lenape to 'drive off your lands those dogs clothed in red [the English] who will do you nothing but harm.'[147] They resolved not to be the 'Slaves of the White People' – and by "white people" they meant the British.[148] These ideas spread rapidly until even the colonists were aware, to varying degrees of truth, of Neolin's influence. On 1 March 1763, the trader James Kenny learned that the Lenape, in response to the prophet's teachings, had 'quit all commerce with the White People.'[149] The Odawa leader Pontiac was Neolin's most prominent adherent. Great Britain had failed to respect the gift-giving culture established under French rule.[150] In response, Pontiac and other native leaders led a three-year war (1763-66) against the British. The Indians' defeat in this conflict, however, which cost 500 British and colonist lives and further exacerbated racial tensions, did not a mean a renunciation of Neolin's teachings. Dependence on treacherous "whites" began to be seen amongst most Indians in the Ohio river valley as another form of servitude.

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[143] Nancy Shoemakers, 'How Indians Got to be Red', *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997), pp. 625-644.
[144] Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, p. 16.
[145] Bryan Rindfleisch, 'My Land Is My Flesh: Silver Bluff, the Creek Indians, and the Transformation of Colonized Space in Early America', *Early American Studies* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2018), p. 408.
[146] Alfred A. Cave, 'The Delaware Prophet Neolin: A Reappraisal', *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 272-273.
[147] 'Native Prophet Testimonies: Neolin (Lenape)', in Lee Irwin, ed., *Coming Down from Above: Prophecy, Resistance, and Renewal in Native American Religions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), p. 380.
[148] Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 43.
[149] 1 March 1763, in John W. Jordan, ed., 'Journal of James Kenny, 1761-1763', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 37, no. 1 (1913), p. 188.
[150] Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, p. 35.

In an ominous turn for the Virginian colonists, Neolin's theme of treachery was present in Indians' complaints to the British about the "white" colonists. "Pontiac's War" was not a complete failure for indigenous peoples in the northwest. The Ohio Indians forced Britain to resume giving gifts in treaty negotiations and offering protection from the colonists.[151] If their "father," George III, refused to help, however, Indians would bring the colonists back into line by force if necessary. The Cherokee in the southeast argued that most of the murders between colonists and native peoples occurred because Indians were 'out in the Woods & meet with the White men hunting on their Ground.'[152] The colonists were to blame for the troubles in the Ohio. Another group of Cherokee later told John Stuart, a British agent, that native peoples 'have often [been] told…they should not steal any Thing belonging to the White People, but the Virginia people will not listen to any Body, but do as they please for they steal our Deer and Land…our young fellows are very angry to see their Hunting Grounds taken from them.'[153] Indigenous peoples had an acute spatial knowledge of their lands and hunting grounds. They marked territorial boundaries with stones or natural divides and used passport systems that allowed different nations, particularly female diplomats, to cross these boundaries.[154] The Cherokee were not the only nation who marked and defended their borders. In July 1770 the Oneida leader Conoquieson from New York found it difficult to restrain his 'young people…unless a speedy end be put to the behaviour of the people who have so repeatedly attacked us.'[155] Signed on 5 November 1768, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, which established a division along the Ohio, appeared a dead letter. The British had promised the Haudenosaunee (or Six Nations) 'that Trade should flourish & Goods abound; that they should be sold us cheap; and that care should be taken to prevent any person from imposing on us.'[156] Instead, the situation was 'now worse than it was before.'[157] As a result of "white" actions, native peoples began to lose faith in Britain's ability to hold back their own colonists.

Like these native petitioners, the British were also unsympathetic towards the colonists' argument that only "white people" were worthy of being called subjects. Following a costly war against France and its Indian allies, British officials were more interested in stabilising and

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[151] Calloway, *Scratch of a Pen*, p. 76.
[152] 'Talk from the Cherokees', 22 September 1766, in Reese, ed., *Francis Fauquier*, vol. 3, p. 1401.
[153] Headmen and Great Ruling Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation to John Stuart, 29 July 1769, in Correspondence from Secretary of State, 1769-70 (The National Archives, London, United Kingdom), Colonial Office Series 5, Volume 1348, f. 79.
[154] Barr, 'Geographies of Power', p. 17 and 28.
[155] Conoquieson to Sir William Johnson, 22 July 1770, in Dunmore Family Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 65 D92), Series I, Box 3.
[156] *Ibid*.
[157] *Ibid*.

reconstructing the empire on the basis of subjecthood for all. Instead of showing sympathy to the Virginians, Thomas Gage blamed these land-hungry colonists for the entire Seven Years' War. 'We are now threatened with hostilities', he wrote from New York in 1768, 'because the people have ill[-]treated the savages in various ways…From the like causes was Great Britain drawn into the War of 1755, which began on the frontiers of Pensilvania and Virginia, and spread itself over the globe'.[158]

The reverberations of that conflict continued for more than a decade. Following Pontiac's war against the British, Sir Jeffrey Amherst paid the peoples of the northwest around sixty thousand pounds sterling – the same amount Parliament hoped the Stamp Act would bring to the treasury.[159] Rather than afford the colonists preferential treatment, then, colonial officials tried to balance their interests with those of indigenous peoples. Lord Botetourt, the governor of Virginia (following Fauquier) until his death in 1770, argued that native peoples were 'equally entitled to Protection with any other of His Majesty's Subjects, that their lives are equally precious, and that all who shall be convicted of murdering an Indian will certainly die.'[160] Botetourt's efforts ran up against the enormous population growth in the west. Virginians were moving away from the over-farmed and expensive tobacco regions of the tidewater to western lands opened up after France's withdrawal from the Ohio. As a result, the population of Kentucky increased dramatically.[161] In 1768 the area was sparsely inhabited – a decade later 20,000 inhabitants lived in the area.[162] Families were not the only groups moving in. Land companies, such as Jefferson's Loyal Land Company, bought up huge tracts of property.[163] Virginia's colonial agent, James Abercromby, compared these companies to 'Charter and private Governments in the East and West Indies'.[164] Fears that these land companies would, like the East India Company, drag Britain into another war were palpable in London.

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[158] Thomas Gage to William Barrington, 10 March 1768, in Howard H. Peckham, ed. *Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the Collections of the William L. Clements Library*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 36.

[159] McDonnell, *Masters of Empire*, p. 372.

[160] Lord Botetourt to Colonel Stephen, 27 September 1769, in Correspondence from Secretary of State, 1769-70 (NA, CO 5/1348), f. 6.

[161] Sachs, *Home Rule*, p. 20.

[162] Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 194.

[163] Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 31-33.

[164] James Abercromby to James Corbin, 1 January 1773, in John C. Van Horne and George Reese, eds., *The Letter Book of James Abercromby Colonial Agent 1751-1773* (Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1991), pp. 446-447.

The "White Peoples'" War in the Ohio

Abercromby was right about a war developing in the west. More than a year after those comments, Indians and "white people" were at each other's throats. The massacre at Yellow Creek on 30 April 1774 was the result of this uptick in tensions. At a location across from the mouth of the Yellow Creek on the Upper Ohio, Jacob and Daniel Greathouse's party, which included the famed killer of Indian peoples, Michael Cresap, murdered the Mingo chief Logan's sister and eleven others. The murders began after a peculiar incident. According to two statements in later memoirs, the Greathouse brothers decided to 'get the Indians drunk – one of whom got drunk, took down a military coat & put it on, swaggering around swearing "I am a white man"'.[165] Whether this statement was true, or if it was merely a case of the colonists trying to justify their violent behaviour after a case of mockery, remains unclear. But this performance was indicative of how many native peoples perceived the colonists. In this act, this man may have reaffirmed the divisions between violent colonists and peaceful Indians.[166] Donning a military coat, a popular mode of masculine attire, he swaggered around to show his professed superiority.[167] By doing so, he may have communicated that, rather than bearing gifts, "white people" often bore weapons, incited violence, and swaggered. The Greathouse party did not prove this man wrong. They rewarded his performance with a horrific execution. In killing Logan's brethren, one person 'stabbed him while in the agonies of death, saying "Many a deer have I served in this way."'[168] The murderer dehumanised his victim and compared his death to the dressing he would give a game animal. Reports of subsequent battles after this massacre show the developing siege mentality on the frontier. In recounting Cresap's intentions to 'put every Indian he met with on the River to death', one report mentioned 'the Indians retired after losing one man, and one man was killed also on the whites peoples' side.'[169] The imperial crisis had split the frontier into two sides: the Ohio Indian nations and those on the "white peoples'" side.

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[165] Recollections of Bazaleel Wells, 1845, in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., *Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 1774* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), p. 16.

[166] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 26. This was not the first incident when Indian peoples used clothing to imitate the colonists. See also Caroline Wigginton, 'In a Red Petticoat: Coosaponakeesa's Performance of Creek Sovereignty in Colonial Georgia', in Joshua David Bellin and Laura L. Mielke, eds., *Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603-1832* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 169-194.

[167] Haulman, *Politics of Fashion*, pp. 102-103.

[168] Recollections of George Edington, 1845, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, pp. 16-17.

[169] Intelligence Received at Pittsburgh, 1 May 1774, in Nicholas B. Wainwright, 'Turmoil at Pittsburgh: Diary of Augustine Prevost, 1774', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85, no. 2 (April 1961), p. 147.

The war between the Mingo leader Logan, who understandably wanted revenge against the "whites" for his sister's murder, and the colonists only cemented the opinion of many Ohio Indians that their enemies could not be trusted. The Virginians were denigrated as the worst of the "white people." Logan's Shawnee allies resolved to rob Pennsylvanians, but they declared that they would 'kill the Virginians where ever they could meet with them'.[170] The attempts of Britain's Indian agents to stop the violence failed. Ohio peoples saw George Croghan and Alexander McKee's entreaties as 'lies', and hoped they were 'more confined to truth than what we usually hear from white people.'[171] They had had enough of "white" people's talk. It was time for action. The governor of Virginia (after Botetourt's replacement William Nelson), John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, saw the opportunity. The war with Logan would increase Virginia's western lands and promote a much-needed sense of unity in a politically polarised colony. Dunmore ordered the colonial militiamen into the Ohio River Valley in May 1774. Five months later, on 10 October, Logan's Confederacy was defeated at the Battle of Point Pleasant. Colonel William Christian recalled the Indians 'had men planted on each river to kill our men as they would swim over…Those over the Ohio in the time of battle called to the men to "drive the white dogs in."'[172] This taunting continued throughout the battle. 'Late in the evening', he continued, 'they called to our men that tomorrow they *wd* have 2000 men for them…They damn[e]d our men often for Sons-of Bitches, said "Don't you whistle now" (deriding the fife) [a musical instrument] and made very merry about a treaty.'[173] They not only implied that "whites" were ferocious animals that could not be trusted – being called a dog was a grave insult amongst many Indians because that term was synonymous with a slave or captive – they also mocked the colonists' treaties.[174] Ohio's indigenous inhabitants were used to the trust and reciprocal friendships fostered through the trading of wampum belts. The imperial crisis reinforced the valuable lesson that, instead of friendship, treaties with "white persons" fed what James Merrell calls the 'engine of empire'.[175]

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[170] Extract from a Journal kept on the River Ohio in the year 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, p. 114.

[171] 21 May 1774, McKee's Journal, in William L. Iscrupe and Shirley G. M. Iscrupe, eds., *Early History of Western Pennsylvania* (Laughlintown: Southwest Pennsylvania Genealogical Services, 1989), p. 208.

[172] William Christian to William Preston, 15 October 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, p. 264.

[173] *Ibid*., p. 265.

[174] 29 September 1772, in Franklin B. Dexter, ed., *Diary of David McClure: Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1899), p. 74 ("insult"); Marion Schwartz, *A History of Dogs in the Early Americas* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 28 ("slave or captive").

[175] James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), p. 281.

As we have seen, these "white" Virginians argued that they were the most meritorious subjects; now on campaign, the colonists embraced their role in expanding the British Empire into Indian country. Far from being anxious about an Indian war, many Virginians declared that they were fighting a war of God against the Indian "heathen." 'Our Cause is good', William Preston declared to his fellow colonists in July 1774, '& therefore we have the greatest Reason, to hope & expect that Heaven will bless us with Success in the Defence of ourselves, & families against a parcel of Murdering Savages Interest[,] Duty, Honour, Self[-]preservation, and everything, which a man ought to hold Dear'.[176] The invasion also provided an opportunity for performance. The colonial militiamen, who marched into the Ohio Valley in May 1774, adorned themselves with cockades of red ribbon. Red was often the distinguishing mark of warriors and brave men.[177] But red was also a British colour. By donning these colours, the Virginians may have believed that they were defending the British Empire as "patriotic" warriors against Indians. The link between "patriotism" and death, explored in the section on the public prints above, was also clearly on display in the west. 'And should it be the Will of God; that I should fall', Colonel William Fleming wrote to comfort his wife in September, 'I must & can not otherwise think, but that he who dies in the Service of & in the defence of his Country, dies in an Act of Religion. and circumstances considered, dies the death of the Rightious.'[178] These soldiers believed that they were superior to native peoples and possibly even to the redcoats, who had often found campaigns in the Ohio Valley an arduous task. Following their victory at the Battle of Point Pleasant, Fleming reported the Indians never got such a 'Scourging from the English before.'[179] He noted at the end of his letter that 'the Enemy had brought their boys and squaas [squaws or Indian women] to knock us in the head I suppose, but God disappointed their Savage presumption.'[180] In contrast to the ineffective redcoats, the martial supremacy of "white peoples," the most meritorious of Britain's subjects, was an established belief amongst many Virginians.

The Entrenchment of Racial Divisions

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[176] Circular letter of Colonel William Preston, 20 July 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, p. 93.
[177] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 83.
[178] William Fleming to Ann Christian, 27 September 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, pp. 213-214.
[179] William Fleming to William Bowyer, 1774, in *Ibid*. p. 256.
[180] *Ibid*., p. 257. For the use of "squaw" as a term of derision against Indian peoples, see Block, *Rape and Sexual*, p. 83.

The victory at Point Pleasant on 10 October 1774, a triumph that was framed as one for the British Empire as much as Virginia, was feted throughout the Old Dominion. For a time, Dunmore may have been one of the most popular governors in the empire. In a poem written after the battle, the militiaman James Newell congratulated the 'Bold Virginians'.[181] 'Ye offspring of Britain!', he wrote on 17 October, 'Come stain not your name, Nor forfeit your right to your forefathers' name, If the Shawnees will fight, we never will fly, We'll fight & we'll conquer, or else we will die.'[182] The emphasis on land and conquering allowed a divided colony to pull together over a war against Indian peoples. In promising to make the Ohio 'ours' and extend the 'Dominion of George our Great King', Virginians also reaffirmed their ties as subjects to George III.[183] On 19 October 1774, the Treaty of Camp Charlotte was signed. Under that treaty, the Shawnee ceased hunting south of the Ohio. Virginians saluted their governor for such an advantageous peace. Two months after Camp Charlotte, the Common Hall of Norfolk sent an address to Dunmore applauding 'your Lordship's moderation in giving peace to a merciless Foe, we cannot but exalt in the happiness of our fellow Subjects on the frontiers, who, by your unremitted Zeal, and Spirited Conduct, have acquired the blessings of Ease, Security, and domestic Enjoyment.'[184] Despite the colonists' glorification of "white" subjecthood, the British government were less impressed with their victory. The Secretary of State, Lord Dartmouth, wrote to Dunmore in January 1775 that Virginians' attempts to 'extirpate those Indians, will have the effect to unite the whole Body of Indians in one Confederacy against them.'[185] Dartmouth worried that, instead of allowing the Haudenosaunee to chastise the Shawnee, Dunmore had taken matters into his own hands and intervened in Indian diplomacy. Neither Dunmore nor most Virginians cared though as the colonists had proven their qualities as British subjects to their king and governor.

Of course, Dunmore's victory met with a very different response in Indian country. Neolin's association of "white people" with Indian dependency had become an established point amongst the Shawnee and Lenape nations, who now saw either neutrality or outright resistance to the colonists as the only choice. Logan, who refused to attend the negotiations at Camp Charlotte, reportedly made a speech about the defeat. In a version of his speech, which

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[181] Portion of James Newell's Orderly Book and Journal, 17 October 1774, in Thwaites and Kellogg, eds., *Dunmore's War*, p. 361.
[182] *Ibid*.
[183] *Ibid*., p. 362.
[184] Address of the Common Hall to John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, and the Governor's Reply, 28 December 1774, in Brent Tarter, ed., *The Order Book and Related Papers of the Common Hall of the Borough of Norfolk, Virginia, 1736-1798* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1979), p. 182.
[185] Dartmouth to Dunmore, 7 January 1775, in Letters from Secretary of State, 1768-76 (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 1375, f. 109.

was carried in the *Virginia Gazette*, Logan reaffirmed the colonists' duplicity and treachery. It began: 'I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not.'[186] 'I had even thought to have lived with you', he noted, 'but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan [at Yellow Creek], not sparing even my women and children…Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one.'[187] This speech's sentiments, which Thomas Jefferson placed on a pedestal as a shining example of Indian oratory, persisted long after the war in 1774 had finished.[188] Richard Butler, the agent for the Continental Congress, recalled similar arguments in August 1775. The Seneca leader Guyasuta complained that the Shawnee leader Cornstalk had 'Spoke Very ill of him & of the Delawares…Said he look[e]d on or Called [them] Dogs or Servts of the white people; & the Sho people said they Still loved the land & would not part with it'.[189] Ohio Indians were well-versed on the topic of servitude to Europeans. Thirty to fifty thousand Indians were enslaved in America, and Virginians only made the practice illegal in 1806 – and that was only after native peoples were defined as "white."[190] The colonists may have transformed "white person" into a term for a true subject, but native peoples had also popularised the notion that dependence on "whites" was slavery and, like the colonists, many were willing to fight to make sure this status would never be realised.

Whig and Tory

The Rise of "Whig" and "Tory"

Just as the imperial crisis changed the partisans' attitudes towards "whiteness," they also revitalised the terms "whig" and "tory." Prominent historians, such as Bernard Bailyn and John Pocock, have largely missed the resurrection of these phrases in the crisis because they argue

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[186] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 188.
[187] *Ibid*., p. 189.
[188] Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, pp. 1-20.
[189] 30 August 1775, in Edward G. Williams, ed., 'The Journal of Richard Butler, 1775: Continental Congress' Envoy to the Western Indians: First Installment', *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 46, no. 4 (October 1963), pp. 394-395.
[190] Gregory Ablavsky, 'Making Indians "White": The Judicial Abolition of Native Slavery in Revolutionary Virginia and its Racial Legacy', *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 159, no. 5 (April 2011), p. 1466 ("fifty") and 1492 ("1806"). For more on Indian slavery, see Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).

that these terms were popular.[191] In fact, as Figure 7 shows, there was widespread ambivalence towards "whig" and "tory," whether in history books or newspapers. For example, David Hume argued in 1741 that the 'appellation of *Whig* and *Tory*', which emerged out of the exclusion crisis, when King Charles II's brother was excluded from office for being a Catholic, had only served to 'confound and distract our government.'[192] Yet, during the imperial crisis, the partisans claimed the mantle of the "whig" defenders of the British constitution and Protestant liberty, and they attacked their enemies as "tory" proponents of slavery. "Tories" were defined in the partisan newspapers as 'A Man that would rob the Public, and murder the constitution of his Country, to raise a Tyrant to rule over it with despotic sway.'[193] In contrast, "whigs" were distinguished as a 'zealous advocate for the public liberties; one that dare lawfully oppose arbitrary power to the utmost; and, rather than suffer his Country to be enslaved, dare plant a dagger in a Tyrant's heart, tho' he had been his best friend & benefactor.'[194] Having called themselves "patriots," many partisans wanted to align their cause with the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Besides the ascent of Protestant co-monarchs William III and Mary II, who deposed the Stuart King James II, the Revolution was feted because it led to a new Bill of Rights in 1689, which gave subjects the right to petition the king, bear arms in a militia, freedom of speech, and free parliamentary elections.[195] If Parliament imposed taxes and tried colonists in admiralty courts, then that assembly had undermined the English Bill of Rights, which promised equal rights for all European-descended subjects. 'To make an odious distinction between us and our fellow-subjects residing in Great Britain', a group of Virginians argued in 1765, 'by depriving us of the ancient trial by juries of our equals…Are these among the instances that call for our expression of filial gratitude to our parent country?'[196] Like "patriot," the partisans used the epithet "whig" because they saw themselves as the defenders of British liberties against its "tory" enemies.

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[191] Few articles discuss the origins of "whig" and "tory." For one that does, though in the seventeenth century, see Robert Willman, 'The Origins of "Whig" and "Tory" in English Political Language', *Historical Journal* 17, no. 2 (June 1974), pp. 247-264. See the dissertation introduction for Bailyn and Pocock's work.

[192] David Hume, 'Of the Parties of Great Britain', 1741, in *idem*., *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, ed. by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987 [1777]), p. 69. For other examples of the negative usage of "whig" and "tory" in the thirteen colonies, see William Douglass, *A summary, historical and political, of the first planting, progressive improvement, and present state of the British settlements in North-America*, vol. 1 (Boston, 1749), p. 87; and Thomas Foxcroft, *Grateful reflexions on the signal appearances of divine providence for Great Britain and its colonies in America, which diffuse a general joy* (Boston, 1760), p. 24.

[193] 'The Meaning of Whig and Tory', in *Boston Evening Post,* 6 April 1767.

[194] *Ibid*.

[195] 'Bill of Rights [1688]', *National Archives*, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/WillandMarSess2/1/2/introduction>, accessed 10 December 2018. For the context on this Bill, see Pincus, *1688*, pp. 292-293.

[196] 'To the Committee of Merchants in London, Virginia, Potomac River, 6 June 1765', in *The New York Journal, or General Advertiser*, 1 January 1767.

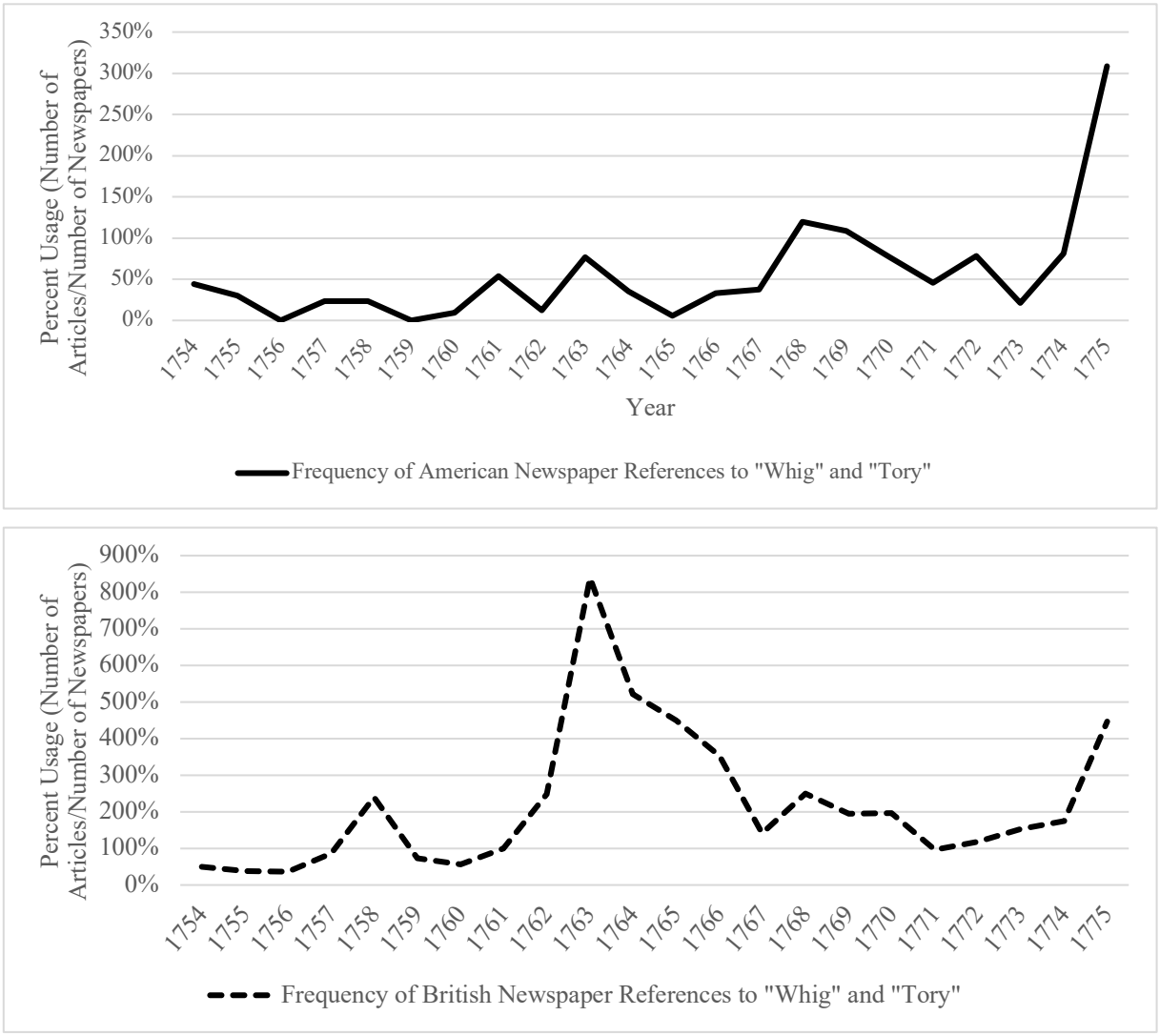

Figure 7: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Whig" and "Tory," 1754-1775.

In their struggle to defend "revolution principles," the partisans needed "whig" heroes to follow. Many colonists chose John Wilkes, a radical politician who aimed to publicise parliamentary proceedings and expand manhood suffrage. To add to his virtues amongst the partisans, he was an opponent of colonial taxation, an attitude held by a growing number of Britons who wanted an 'empire of settlement' where colony and metropole were united.[197] These three policy positions made him a popular figure in the colonies. The Committee of the Boston Sons of Liberty appealed to Wilkes in 1768. They declared themselves to be 'The friends of Liberty, Wilkes, Peace and good order…assembled at the Whig Tavern Boston New

[197] Du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire*, p. 49.

England'.[198] Wilkes was also widely feted because, although a hater of the Scots, he was willing to let ordinary Britons and even women join his movement. In a letter to a female friend, he hoped that 'ye Ladies, who call yrselves [sic] Patriots, would exert yrselves [sic] in ye great Cause of Liberty & your Country, & shew [sic] a proper disdain of ye Enemies of Both'.[199] Mobilising these forces, Wilkes and his allies aimed to destroy the 'secret influence' that he declared was being exerted on the king's cabinet.[200] Wilkes's supporters even designed medals, which gloried in this 'faithful Son of England', when he was running for the seat of Middlesex in 1768 (as shown in Figure 8).[201] Made in Britain, though they may have made their way to America, these medals bore the slogan: "May True Britains Enjoy Liberty and Property Without Oppression No. 45." Handkerchiefs, an example of which can be seen in Figure 9, were also woven in England to celebrate Wilkes's cause of liberty. Medals and handkerchiefs, the latter of which were often printed with cartoons and other images, were a form of propaganda that, alongside the homespun shirts and political buttons discussed above, may have helped the partisans show that they were the true friends of liberty and "whiggism." It was important that the partisans used Wilkes as their hero. Unlike Chatham and Camden, the partisans' association with such a violent opponent of the Scots would have consequences in their own rhetoric of "manly" opposition to Britain.

Figure 8: The front and reverse of the John Wilkes medal, made in 1768 in Britain. Source: Colonial Williamsburg

[198] Committee of the Boston Sons of Liberty to John Wilkes, 6 June 1768, in Robert J. Taylor et al, eds., *Papers of John Adams*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 214.
[199] John Wilkes to "Madam," unknown date, in John Wilkes Papers (William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan), Volume 2.
[200] Wilson, *The sense of the people*, p. 213.
[201] Letter to the Worthy Electors, in John Wilkes Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 4.

Figure 9: Handkerchief, printed "John Wilkes," and made in England in 1775. Source: Colonial Williamsburg

The Polarising Consequences of the Partisans' Appropriation of "Whig" and "Tory"

With buttons, handkerchiefs, and medals being displayed as signs of true "whiggism," many Virginians found it more difficult than ever to remain neutral and "independent." Traditionally, being a political "independent" was a meritorious distinction for someone above party and the self-interest that characterised the use of "whig" and "tory" in the eighteenth century.[202] Observing the divided state of British politics, Robert Stewart wrote to George Washington in August 1765: 'How happy my dear Colonel are they who indepe[n]dent of all Parties can, collected within themselves, enjoy that tranquillity and peace of mind which these others must ever be Strangers to?'[203] Similar to calls for a more genteel "patriotism," Stewart advocated a more tranquil, independent opinion on politics as distinct from the enthusiasm and "modern patriotism" that seemed to have taken over in Virginia. There was merit, Stewart argued, in remaining above the 'unexpected Revolutions' in political life.[204] That virtuous position became more difficult because, in the partisans' eyes, "whiggism" had become associated with being an "independent." In a 1766 issue of the *Virginia Gazette*, an 'Independent Whig' wrote that 'all ministers who, either from wrong heads or wicked hearts, shall endeavour to hurt or

[202] Robert McCluer Calhoon, *Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 55.
[203] George Washington to Robert Stewart, 18 August 1765, in W. W. Abbot et al, eds., *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, vol. 7 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 390-391.
[204] *Ibid*., p. 390.

impoverish them [the colonists], should be punished as traitors to their King and country.'[205] These fears of declining independence in politics, given voice in Stewart's letter to Washington, were also felt in Britain. Edmund Burke, in a speech concerning John Wilkes in 1769, also tried to remain above the fray. 'I highly respect the principles of a Whig, and principles of Tories', he noted in a quip against Wilkes, 'because I respect men who have any principle[s] at all.'[206] Railing against the Townshend Duties less than four months later, Burke saw 'the prejudice of party in this affair'.[207] He called this faction the '*King's men*, or the *King's friends*, by an invidious exclusion of the rest of his Majesty's most loyal and affectionate subjects.'[208] Burke wrote that 'patriotism was [not] a bloody idol, which required the sacrifice of children and parents, or dearest connexions in private life, and of all the virtues that rise from those relations'.[209] He feared that meritorious titles, such as "patriotism" and "whiggism," had become a plaything of party politics.

Nicholas Cresswell, an English immigrant to Virginia, experienced the decline in political independence, and the growing divide between "whigs" and "tories," first-hand. Cresswell, the twenty-four-year-old son of a Derbyshire landowner, had come to the Old Dominion seeking land.[210] However, his experience of Virginia was tempestuous at best. Creswell was opposed to the Continental Congress, which was formed in 1774 to oppose Britain's taxation measures, and its relentless petitions to the king. 'I am obliged to act the Hypocrite', he wrote in November 1774, 'and extol these proceedings as the wisest productions of any assembly on Earth. But in my heart I Despise them and look upon them with contempt.'[211] He could not escape the subject of politics though. Sitting in an Alexandria church in northern Virginia, he was bombarded with 'nothing but Political discourse instead of Religious Lectures.'[212] Four months later, these private statements in his diary had landed Cresswell in trouble with the public authorities. 'I understand the Committee are going to take me up for a Spy', he wrote, 'I will save [them] the trouble by decamping immediately.'[213] The label "spy" was inflected with class and gendered prejudices in the eighteenth century. It

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[205] 'From a late English paper to the Printer', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 21 March 1766.
[206] Speech on Wilkes's Privilege, 23 January 1769, in Paul Langford, ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 101.
[207] Speech on Townshend Duties, 19 April 1769, in *Ibid*., p. 232.
[208] *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770, in *Ibid*., p. 274.
[209] *Ibid*., p. 317.
[210] 'Introduction', in Harold B. Gill, Jr., and George M. Curtis III, eds., *A Man Apart: Journal of Nicholas Creswell, 1774-1781* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), p. xi.
[211] 1 November 1774, in *Ibid*., p. 27.
[212] 6 November 1774, in *Ibid*., p. 28.
[213] 14-18 February 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 34.

defined someone, usually a poor person or a woman, who was solely motivated by money and self-interest or as someone who fought in a dishonourable and ungentlemanly manner.[214] Therefore, this epithet struck at the heart of a man's gentility. 'The Committees Act as Justices', he continued, 'if any person is found to be inimical to the Liberties of America, they give them over to the mobility to punish as they think proper, and it is seldom they come…without Tarring and Feathering.'[215] Cresswell fled west in May 1775, but the Ohio River was not far enough. He got into a political discussion with a fellow traveler. His rhetorical sparring partner was not impressed with Cresswell's politics. He 'threat[e]ned to Tar & Feather me. Obliged to pocket the affront. Find I shall be torifyed if I hold any further Confab with these hot Libertymen.'[216] Having suffered persecution from the "mobility" for months, Creswell had even invented a verb – "torifyed" – for his sufferings. Forgetting his landed ambitions, he left Virginia on a ship bound for New York and then Britain.

If Cresswell thought he could escape to England to avoid these pro-partisan statements, he would have encountered similar sentiments at home. Figure 7 shows a sharp rise in the usage of "whig" and "tory" in 1775 in British newspapers. These ideas were also contained in the many pamphlets published in London. In a 1775 tract, entitled *Resistance No Rebellion*, one writer argued that those who supported Britain's imperial policies adhered to 'the old Tory principles of passive obedience and non-resistence', and supported the 'Tory ministry['s]' tyrannical rule over the colonies.[217] 'A ministry', he observed, 'composed of Tories, must, by the principles they profess, be enemies on course to the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and to the free constitution of this kingdom, and if you search the annals of England, you will find they have always been so.'[218] The 'slavish and absurd principles of Toryism', such as the 'divine hereditary right of kings' and the 'unlimited power of their royal prerogatives', were 'first broached in this kingdom under the reign of that pedantic Prince, James the First'.[219] To another London pamphleteer, these 'friends of the abdicated Stuarts' – the enemies of 'Whigs, fierce for liberty' – were the source of all that had gone wrong in Britain.[220] The pamphleteer blamed them for the nadir in relations between Britain and the thirteen colonies, and argued that they had effected an 'unnatural destruction of our own blood' – an act that cannot be

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[214] Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, p. 104.
[215] 14-18 February 1775, in Gill, Jr., and Curtis, eds., *A Man Apart*, p. 34.
[216] 14 May 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 54.
[217] Anonymous, *Resistance No Rebellion*, 1775, in Dickinson, ed., *British Pamphlets,* vol. 4, p. 12.
[218] *Ibid*., pp. 24-25.
[219] *Ibid*., p. 25.
[220] Anonymous, *The Pamphlet, Entitled, "Taxation No Tyranny," Candidly Considered, and its Arguments, and Pernicious Doctrines, Exposed and Refuted*, 1775, in *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 322 ('friends') and 336 ('Whigs').

'dignified by the name of "War"'.[221] Wars were fought between two combatants, he noted, not one force of "whigs" and another force of "tory" insurgents who appeared intent on undermining the constitution. The British friends of America may have known what they were about in associating the "tories" with slavery. The "tories," who controlled the country under Queen Anne in the early eighteenth century, were primarily responsible for the expansion of slavery in the Americas and were traditionally associated with adherence to the divine right of kings and the Stuart monarchy.[222] The "tories," therefore, were defined as the followers of slavish principles that had been overthrown in the Glorious Revolution. No true Briton would support a "tory" cause.

British and Disaffected Critiques of "Whig" and "Tory"

There were just as many Britons who opposed these "whiggish" sentiments though. Some worried that the partisans had appropriated the ideas of political theorists for self-interested purposes.[223] Their use of '[John] *Locke,* [Algernon] *Sidney,* [John] *Selden*', one author mocked in 1765, '[is done] to prove that every *Englishman*…is represented in the *British Parliament*'.[224] Instead of respect for these seventeenth-century theorists, the pamphleteer argued that the protestors had misrepresented their words. 'The Liberty of an *Englishman* is a Phrase of so various a Signification', the writer continued, 'having within these few years being used as [a] synonymous Term for Blasphemy, Bawdy, Treason, Libels, Strong Beer, and Cyder'.[225] The rights of Englishmen, he noted, had many meanings, but one of them did not include 'an Exemption from Taxes imposed by the Authority of the Parliament of *Great Britain*.'[226] The typecasting of the partisans as imitators who had little comprehension of the political authors they cited was a consistent theme in British writings. In his letters, George Grenville, the former Prime Minister, attacked the Pennsylvania politician John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767-68). Dickinson's notion that taxation and representation 'must go together' had attained a wide readership throughout the colonies. In fact, these letters were part of the impetus behind Virginia's resolves against the Townshend

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[221] *Ibid*., p. 340.
[222] Holly Brewer, 'Slavery, Sovereignty, and "Inheritable Blood": Reconsidering John Locke and the Origins of American Slavery', *American Historical Review* 122, no. 4 (October 2017), pp. 1042-1043.
[223] Gould, *Persistence of Empire*, p. 146.
[224] Soame Jenyns. *The Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies, by the Legislature of Great Britain, Briefly Consider'd* (London, 1765), in Dickinson, ed., *British Pamphlets*, vol. 1, p. 125.
[225] *Ibid*., p. 127.
[226] *Ibid*.

Duties in 1769. For Grenville, however, the importance of Dickinson's arguments meant that they had to be opposed. The sovereign himself, the parliamentarian declared, was the true representative of his subjects.[227] He argued that 'the term Representative is not the Technical Word in our Constitution'.[228] In his letter, Grenville readily quoted 'from Mr Locke both because his opinions in this Treatise have been principally relied on [by the partisans] as the Foundation of many Extravagant & absurd Propositions which I am convinced He never meant to encourage'.[229] He intended to fight the partisans and their 'Force & Fraud' at any turn if they involved the abuse of meritorious titles (and distinguished political theorists) for political gain in the imperial crisis.

Besides attacking the political theorists upon which the partisans based their arguments, many disaffected and likeminded persons in Britain revitalised the term "tory" into a positive phrase for a supporter of the constitution. The calculation that underpinned this linguistic move was simple: if the partisans were "whigs," then the only sensible political position could be the opposite. In the colonies, the Massachusetts lawyer Daniel Leonard transformed "toryism" from a vice into a virtue that signified support for Britain's mixed constitution. Leonard's widely read 1773 address *To all Nations of Men* was hardly a statement of divine monarchist principles. Leonard argued that anyone who valued their freedoms would oppose the 'robbery' and 'murderous intentions' of the "sons of liberty."[230] If 'arbitrary will…is *lawful government*', he lamented, 'and that the [British] subject though certainty to be stripped of liberty and property at pleasure…none will be a more zealous and determined tory, than MASSACHUSETTENSIS.'[231] Samuel Johnson in Britain took this side as well. The Welsh-born diarist Hester Thrale noted that he 'calls himself a Tory, & glories in it'.[232] Johnson's deep antipathy toward the "whigs" originated from his loathing of most British political titles. According to James Boswell's *Life,* the lexicographer argued that '*Whiggism is the negation of all principle*' and that the 'first Whig was the Devil'.[233] Like "patriot," he thought that "whig"

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[227] George Grenville to William Knox, 15 August 1768, in William Knox Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Item 33. For this pamphlet, see John Dickinson, *Letters from A Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, ed. by R. T. H. Halsey (New York: Outlook Company, 1903).
[228] *Ibid*.
[229] *Ibid*.
[230] Massachusettensis (Daniel Leonard), *To all Nations of Men* (Boston, 1773), in Charles S. Hyneman and Donald S. Lutz, eds., *American Political Writings during the Founding Era, 1760-1805*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983), pp. 214-215.
[231] *Ibid*., pp. 215-216.
[232] Katherine C. Balderston, ed., *Thraliana: Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi), 1776-1809*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 448.
[233] Boswell, *Life*, p. 110 ('*negation*') and 326 ('Devil').

was being used and abused for the sake of winning votes.[234] "Tory" was the one exception to his aversion to political epithets. In his view, a "tory" was an adherent of the British constitution and the Church of England, as opposed to "whigs" who wanted to dismantle these institutions in favour of greater political power.[235] Johnson's arguments, which put the writings of *Resistance No Rebellion* on its head, also aligned with his view on slavery and colonialism. The "whig," for Johnson at least, was a title befitting someone involved in the enslavement and subjugation of other human beings.

British American and American

The Emergence of "British American"

Yet, as was the case with "white person," the Virginian partisans readily accepted – and even gloried in – their titles as "whiggish" conquerors on behalf of Britain. The epithet "British American," which receives little attention in the scholarship, was another attempt by the partisans to show that their interests and those of Britain were conjoined.[236] The first recorded usage of "British American," shown in Figure 10, coincided with a renewed battle over who was responsible for "settling" the thirteen colonies. The Parson's Cause in Virginia set off this debate. Since 1758, the Anglican clergy had been paid in tobacco each year. However, following a poor harvest, the House of Burgesses passed a new law that allowed debts in tobacco to be paid in currency at a rate of two pennies per pound.[237] George III vetoed the law. For many Virginians, such as Richard Bland, this was an unconscionable invasion of the colonists' legislative rights. Bland subscribed to a federal vision of the empire, where Virginia was an independent polity, yet still subject to the king and Parliament.[238] He based this argument on a distinctive view of colonial history. Bland argued that the colonists were descended from "settlers" who had brought their English rights with them and embodied these liberties in charters granted by the king. Therefore, Parliament had no right to legislate for

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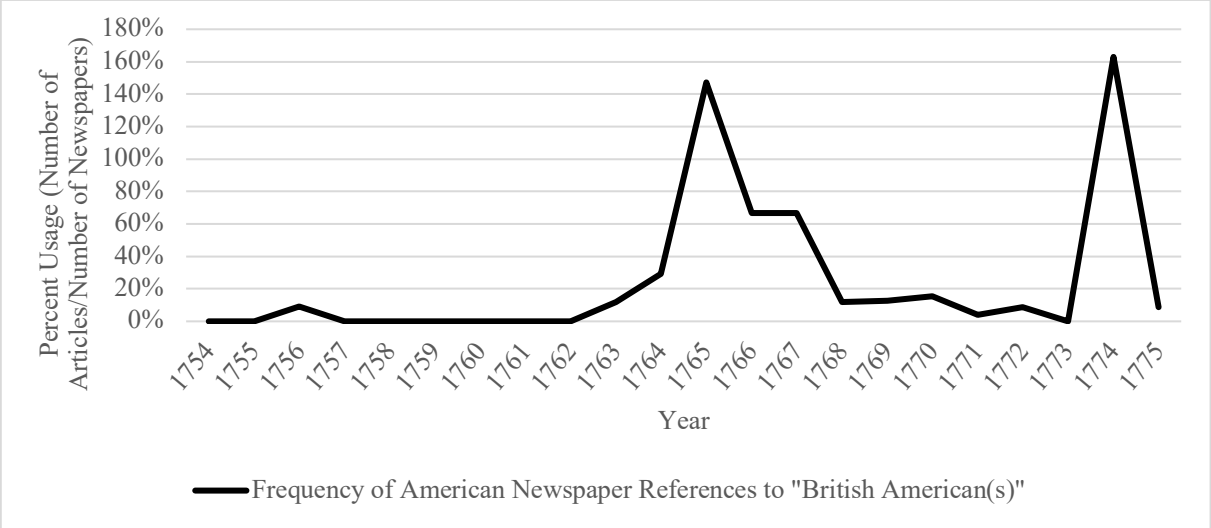
234 Robert Folkenflik, 'Johnson's politics', in Clingham, ed., *Companion to Johnson*, p. 109.
235 *Ibid*., p. 104.
236 There have been many historical approaches to identity in the imperial crisis. For the argument that the colonies were never more British than before independence, see Gallup-Diaz et al, eds., *Anglicizing America*; and Julie M. Flavell, *When London Was the Capital of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). For a contrary opinion, see Butler, *Becoming America*. For a more recent discussion of these issues, which argues that convergence also led to conflict, see Daniel Robinson, 'Giving Peace to Europe: European Geopolitics, Colonial Political Culture, and the Hanoverian Monarchy in British North America, ca. 1740-63', *William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (April 2016), pp. 291-332.
237 Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire*, pp. 174-176.
238 *Ibid*., p. 175. For a similar statement, see John Adams, *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, 1765, in Adams, ed., *Works of John Adams*, vol. 3, p. 454 and 452.

colonies that governed themselves. The 'present Inhabitants of *Virginia*', he argued in 1763, were not 'conquered by the *British* arms.'[239] Rather, they were 'Descendants of Englishmen who by their own consent and at the expense of their own Blood and Treasure undertook to settle this new Region'.[240] These attitudes only hardened after Parliament's imposition of the Currency and Sugar Acts in 1764, which tightened the regulations surrounding the use of paper currency and the price of sugar.[241] Following these taxes, the Massachusetts Reverend Oxenbridge Thatcher was the first colonist to use "British American" in print. Like Bland, he conceived of the British Empire as a federation where the inhabitants had the 'same British rights…as the inhabitants of the Island itself'.[242] 'Born in one of the colonies', he noted, 'and descended from ancestors, who were among the first planters of that colony…he hath ever exalted in the name of Briton.'[243] Thatcher and Bland believed that the colonists merited their status as "British Americans," as true subjects who had bled for the British Empire.



[239] 'Bland's Constitutional Argument in '"The Colonel Dismounted," 1763', *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (July 1910), p. 32.
[240] *Ibid*.
[241] Edwards, 'Grenville's Silver Hammer', p. 344.
[242] Oxenbridge Thatcher, *The Sentiments of a British American* (Boston, 1764) (Newberry, Chicago, J 5831.862), p. 4.
[243] *Ibid*., p. 16.

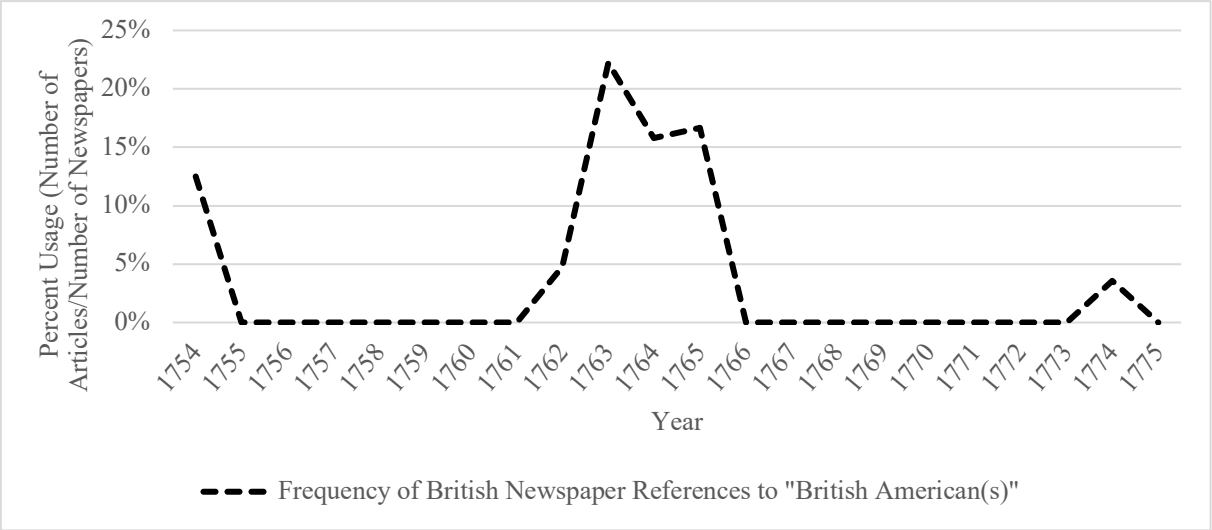


Figure 10: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "British American(s)," 1754-1775.

Following the Stamp Act crisis, there was another peak in usage of "British American." Two petitions to Parliament, both sent in May 1768, carried similar sentiments to that of Bland and Oxenbridge. The first, written by the speaker of the House of Burgesses, Peyton Randolph, noted that Britain's taxation measures were 'subversive of those constitutional principles of liberty and freedom which they and their ancestors have ever esteemed their indisputable birth-rights, as the immediate heirs and descendants of free born Britons.'[244] The second petition, written by the then-Governor William Nelson, supplemented these arguments in favour of honouring the colonists' rights at birth as Englishmen with those of merit. 'As Members of the British Empire', it declared, Virginians deserved the 'Rights of British Subjects who by a fundamental and vital Principle of *their* [emphasis added] Constitution cannot be subjected to any Kind of Taxation or have the smallest portion of their property taken from them by any Power on Earth without their Consent given by their Representatives in Parliament.'[245] If this principle was to 'decay', then 'the Constitution must pine away and expire with it'.[246] The petition finished with another explanation of the continent's history. It stated that 'Our Ancestors' had 'at the Expence of their Blood and Treasure first explored and settled these new Regions'.[247] The implication of Britain's measures, that the colonies had not been pulling their own weight in the empire, frustrated the partisans because they had been required to increase

[244] Memorial of the People of Virginia met in General Assembly, 18 May 1768, in Petition, memorial and remonstrance by the citizens of Virginia (NA, London), Extracted Series 11, Volume 8, f. 29.
[245] To the Honourable the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, May 1768, *Ibid*., f. 31.
[246] *Ibid*.
[247] *Ibid*.

expenditure on infrastructure, food stores, and transportation during the Seven Years' War.[248] In October 1768 Robert Carter Nicholas wrote to convince John Norton that Virginia was not 'disaffected to their King or Mother Country.'[249] '[W]e have not', he continued, 'the most distant wish of an Independancy: we only desire a free enjoyment of our Birth Rights'.[250] He asked: '[What] can Great Britain desire more of us than the Fruits of our whole Labour, which she already reaps?'[251] Far from calling for political revolution, the partisans argued that the interests of Great Britain and the thirteen colonists were inseparable. To diminish one colony, these Virginians noted, undermined the British Empire as a whole.

The Exclusionary Foundations of "British American"

Six years and four legislative acts relating to the colonies later, these "British American" sentiments had not diminished. In fact, as Figure 10 shows, the year 1774 led to another explosion in usage of the epithet "British American" – a title that justified attacks on Indians as proof of white Virginians' loyalty. One "British American," in particular, argued in the *Virginia Gazette* that the Empire had 'sunk to the lowest state of venality and corruption' and that 'we have the greatest reason to fear, that the period of her ruin is not far distant.'[252] Thomas Jefferson joined in these arguments. Writing to Virginia's delegates at the first Continental Congress in 1774, Jefferson located the assemblies' authority in the laws of conquest, not just their natural rights as Britons. 'America was conquered', he argued in his *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, 'and her settlements made, and firmly established, at the expence of individuals, and not of the British public. Their own blood was spilt in acquiring lands for their settlement, their own fortunes expended in making that settlement effectual; for themselves they fought, for themselves they conquered, and for themselves alone they have a right to hold.'[253] In essence, Jefferson was arguing that Virginians had spilled their blood against native peoples in order to make that colony their own, and Britain had no right, unless it was committed to invading the colonies, to hold absolute power over that land without consultation with the local assembly. To further support the assemblies' sovereignty, Jefferson

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[248] Du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire*, p. 72.
[249] Robert Carter Nicholas to John Norton, 3 October 1768, in John Norton Papers (John D. Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, Virginia, MS 1936.3).
[250] *Ibid*.
[251] *Ibid*.
[252] 'A Hint of Sentiments by a British American', 4 May 1769, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 1, p. 66.
[253] Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, 1774, Peterson, ed., *Jefferson: Writings*, p. 106.

aggregated the colonial charters, which established the colonists' rightful possession to the land, into an *American State Papers* project.[254] The Pennsylvanian Ebenezer Hazard supported Jefferson in this endeavour. This collection's motive was clear: 'to the Whole will be added an INTRODUCTION, containing an Account of the Constitution of the different British American Colonies'.[255] British America may have consisted of thirteen mainland colonies (and twenty-six colonies in total, including the Caribbean and Canada), but Jefferson and Hazard argued that they shared one common history of resistance against Indian peoples.

The title "British American," therefore, was not extended to all inhabitants of the British Empire. At this time, the word "British" was synonymous with "English," and not with the Scottish inhabitants (often known as "North Britons") who had joined the union in 1707.[256] In practice, then, "British American" actually meant "English American." The thirty thousand Scottish inhabitants in Virginia were aware of this reality.[257] They were often excluded from the partisans' arguments – that Virginians had fought and died to extend the empire – because the Scots were seen to be a transient and self-interested people. Nativism and celebrations of the title "Native" took hold as the partisans contrasted their virtue with the Scots.[258] British merchants were forced to 'sell their [scarce] goods and merchandizes…at the same rates they have been accustomed to [before 1765]'.[259] (This policy existed despite colonial exports having fallen to a tenth of their pre-war value as a result of nonexportation agreements; and goods having jumped seventy to two hundred per cent in value as a result of nonimportation regulations.)[260] Individuals unwilling to engage in this moral economy, and thereby give up their current profits for the cause, added 'a fashionable suit of *tar and feathers*' to their wardrobe.[261] Between June and July 1774, a "British American" wrote to the *Virginia Gazette* that the colonists could not 'flatter ourselves that this angelick exertion of virtue will be general

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[254] Tomlins, *Freedom Bound*, pp. 184-185 ("rightful"); Fred Shelley, 'Ebenezer Hazard: America's First Historical Editor', *William and Mary Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (January 1955), pp. 44-74 ("project").

[255] Ebenezer Hazard to Thomas Jefferson, 23 August 1774, in Julian P. Boyd et al, eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 145.

[256] Ned C. Landsman, 'The Provinces and the Empire: Scotland, the American colonies and the development of British provincial identity', in Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 259. See also *idem*., *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760* (New York: Twayne, 1997), pp. 6-7.

[257] Aaron Fogleman, 'Migration to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1992), p. 698.

[258] Thomas Jefferson referred to himself as a "Native" in his *Summary Rights of British America*.

[259] Samuel Purviance, Jr., to Peyton Randolph and Other Principal Gentlemen at Williamsburg, 26 June 1774, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 132.

[260] Allan Kulikoff, '"Such Things Ought Not To Be": The American Revolution and the First National Great Depression', in Andrew Shankman, ed., *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for a Continent* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), p. 136 and 138.

[261] 'A Suit of Tar and a Shower of Eggs', 24 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 486.

when we consider that many of her present [foreign mercantile] inhabitants are, like birds of passage, settled only for a time, for the purposes of raising fortunes by trade, and whose ultimate view is returning, with the fortunes they acquire, to the connections they have left behind in Britain, and that there are others who[se] daily bread depends upon the continuance of the laws we complain of.'[262] The partisans' opposition to Scottish merchants was one part of the origins story of America's obsession with the yeomanry, whom Thomas Jefferson later called 'the chosen people of God'.[263] Merchants were able to flee Britain's colonial impositions for home. Smallholder farmers, or the "yeomen," were not so lucky. These "natives" were the only meritorious inhabitants upon whom Virginians could depend in a crisis.

There was much resistance to these exclusionary, merit-based ideas of "British Americanness." Britons in the metropole rarely, if ever, used "British American." This lack of usage is reflected in Figure 10. The thirteen colonies were referred to, in a possessive sense, as "British American colonies," but the colonists were not themselves referred to as "British Americans." This was not a case of ignorance. Britain was well aware of the colonial charters and of the partisans' arguments.[264] They just thought these opinions were misguided. William Knox feared that the "British American" colonists wanted preferential treatment over British subjects in India, Canada, and the Caribbean. To imperial reformers, such as Knox, favouritism was out of the question. They worried that if one group of subjects claimed self-determination, then it would only be a matter of time before other colonies, whether in Canada or Bengal, made the same argument. Knox dismissed the notion that the Crown had granted 'Charters destructive of its own Sovereignty.'[265] 'If the Crown', he wrote, 'is intitled to the Allegiance of the Colonists, it is intitled to the means of exacting it from them.'[266] The 'British Colonies are to be regarded in no other Light, but as subservient to the Commerce of their Mother Country; the Colonists are merely Factors for the Purposes of Trade, and in all Considerations concerning the Colonies, *this* must be always the leading Idea.'[267] Knox held to the doctrine of mercantilism, which called for a strong empire that would act as a unified trade bloc against foreign powers. In his view, the North American colonies were just that: colonies – colonial

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[262] 'The British American, No. VIII', 28 July 1774, in *Ibid*., vol. 1, p. 189.
[263] Jefferson, *Notes*, in Peterson, ed., *Jefferson: Writings*, p. 290.
[264] Following the Stamp Act, a pamphlet was published in London carrying a map of North America and the colonial charters in a single, concise volume. See *The Charters of the following Provinces of North America* (London, 1766).
[265] Memorandum to the Earl of Shelburne, 1763, in Peckham, ed., *Sources of American Independence*, vol. 1, p. 150.
[266] *Ibid*.
[267] *Ibid*., p. 152.

"children" who were subordinated to the "mother country."[268] Under the Navigation Acts, which restricted trade to within the empire, the colonies were extractive polities created to benefit the metropole.[269] Edmund Burke, who was more friendly to the partisans, also thought they were asking for special treatment. He argued that, in their opposition to imperial regulations, the protestors had invented distinctions between internal taxes levied on items within a nation, and external levies on goods shipped out of the colonies. On 19 April 1774 he urged the Prime Minister Lord North to abandon 'the American distinction of internal and external duties.'[270] Rather than these invented terms, Burke argued that Britain's imperial constitution was based on two ideas: 'subordination and liberty'.[271]

The "British Americans" Become "Americans"

Frustrated with Britain's inability to acknowledge their grievances as "British Americans," the partisans started to call themselves "Americans." Less a well thought out process than one born of necessity, the rise of the epithet "American" to prominence was improvised and could not be predicted before the crisis. Whilst the French writer, John Hector St. John de Crèvecœur asked 'What then is the American, this new man?', Jane Kamensky notes that, for most colonists, the epithet "Americans" – if it did not refer to the "Royal Americans" regiment – denoted a 'group of political subjects with common economic interests and possibilities', but 'not yet common grievances'.[272] The dumping of tea into Boston harbour on 16 December 1773 and Parliament's abolition of the Massachusetts Charter provided the partisans with such grievances.

If Figures 10 and 11 are compared, one can see that, by 1775, the terms "British American" and "American" had gone in separate directions. With the "Coercive" or "Intolerable Acts," as they were known in the colonies, the former epithet had collapsed in

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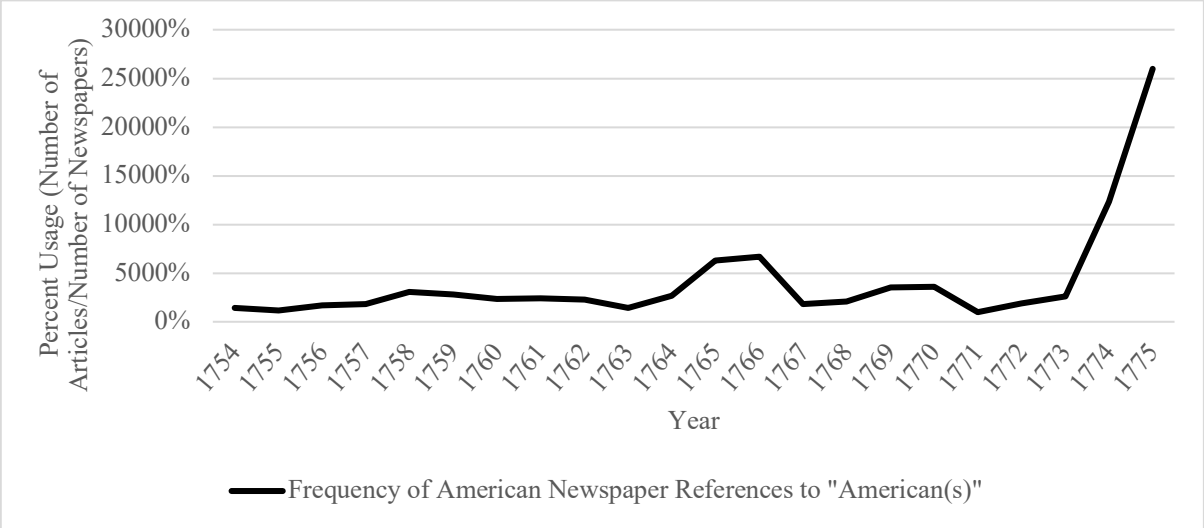
[268] Jonathan Barth, 'Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (April 2016), pp. 257-290.
[269] Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution*, pp. 88-89.
[270] *Speech on American Taxation*, 19 April 1774, in Langford, ed., *Edmund Burke*, vol. 2, p. 457.
[271] *Ibid*., pp. 460-461.
[272] John Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American farmer; describing certain provincial situations, manners, and customs, not generally known; And Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America* (London, 1782), p. 51 ('new man'); Kamensky, *Revolution in Color*, p. 436 ('political subjects'). For Crèvecoeur's comments on "American," which were published in 1782, but originally written in the imperial crisis, see Christopher Iannini, '"The Itinerant Man": Crèvecoeur's Caribbean, Raynal's Revolution, and the Fate of Atlantic Cosmopolitanism', *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (April 2004), pp. 201-234.

popularity, and the latter term had become the assumed name of the partisan cause.[273] The partisans increasingly spoke of "American" rights, the enemies of America, and "Americans" as a people. Virginia's House of Burgesses voted to aid Boston and confirmed a day of fast and prayer would be held on 1 June. The Burgesses 'implore[d] the divine Interposition …to give us one Heart and one Mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper Means, every Injury to *American* Rights'.[274] Though he did not agree with the destruction of the tea in Boston harbour, George Washington approved of the Bostonians' ideals. '[T[he cause of Boston', he wrote, '[…] ever will be considered the cause of America…we shall not suffer ourselves to be sacrificed by piecemeal though god only knows what is to become of us'.[275] Washington's attachment to the Bostonians' plight was slightly self-interested. One Glaswegian understood why many colonists resisted: 'The Virginians (and indeed most of the colonies) look upon the late act of parliament for blocking up the harbour of Boston, and new modelling their charter, as a thing that may one day or other happen to themselves'.[276] Boston's cause was now seen as the cause of all worthy "Americans."



[273] The "Intolerable Acts" or "Coercive Acts" consisted of four pieces of legislation: the Boston Port Act (that closed the port of Boston); the Massachusetts Government Act; the Administration of Justice Act (allowing trials of royal officials to take place in England, not America); and the Quartering Act (allowing the governor to provide housing for British troops). See David Ammerman, *In the Common Cause: American Responses to the Coercive Acts of 1774* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974).

[274] 'Resolution of the House of Burgesses Designating a Day of Fasting and Prayer', 24 May 1774, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, p. 105.

[275] George Washington to George William Fairfax, 10-15 June 1774, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Colonial Series*, vol. 10, pp. 96-97.

[276] David Wardrobe to Archibald Provan, 30 June 1774, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 135.

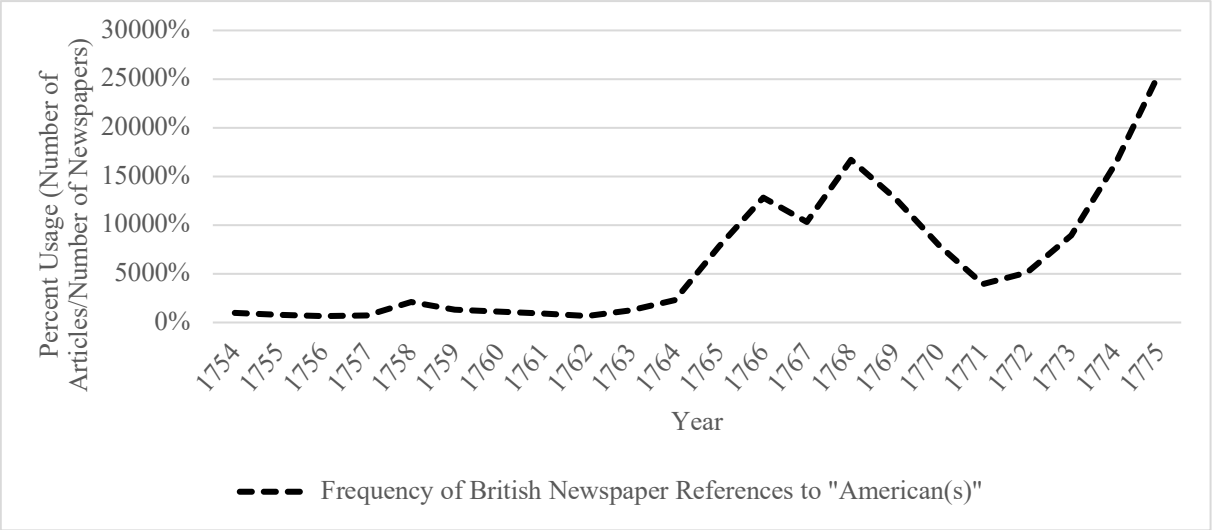


Figure 11: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "American(s)," 1754-1775.

The upturn in tensions resulted in "American" quickly becoming synonymous with "patriotism." "American" was not just a title earned at birth, like the partisans conceived of "Briton," it was a political label that the colonists had to earn. Hundreds accepted that Boston was suffering in the "American" cause and promised assistance. Some sent money to Boston, others sent men, and Alexandria, Virginia, shipped thirty-eight barrels of flour, 150 barrels of wheat, and cash.[277] On 1 June 1774, the same day the House of Burgesses voted to enact a fast day in support of Boston, a woman from Williamsburg wrote to her sister in London. On that day of solemn reflection, she noted that 'Never, since my residence in Virginia, have I ever seen so large a congregation as was this day assembled to hear divine service. What will be the next event, God knows!'[278] She worried that Britain would halt all trade in Virginia, as the empire had done in Boston, but she was undaunted. 'We have a large, fine, extensive country', she continued, 'that would maintain millions more than it present contains, and can do much better without England than England can without her.'[279] Following these glowing displays of loyalty to her adopted country, America, the woman finished her letter with a powerful statement. 'You see, my sister, I talk like an American', she declared, 'and well I may; she has been kinder to me than my native country; to her I owe every thing I possess, and I will most chearfully comply with whatever may be thought of for the general good, though it will be considerably to my disadvantage.'[280] The act of speaking and talking like an "American,"

[277] Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, pp. 116-118.
[278] 'Extract of a letter from a Lady at Williamsburgh, in Virginia, to a friend in London, dated June 1', in *The Weekly Magazine, Or Edinburgh Amusement*, vol. 25 (Edinburgh, 1774), p. 254.
[279] *Ibid*.
[280] *Ibid*.

particularly amongst ladies who wanted to show that they, too, could refuse to buy British goods, soon became a powerful way of showing that one merited the epithet.[281] From the very beginning, the epithet "American" was closely intertwined with meritorious service in speeches, writings, and acts for the "Common Cause" against Britain.

The Continental Associations helped the partisans think of themselves as part of one larger "American" community.[282] The First Continental Congress, which met in response to the Coercive Acts from 5 September to 26 October 1774, established these bodies, which enforced the non-consumption of British goods throughout the thirteen colonies. Though the idea for such an association had originated amongst the Bostonians, Patrick Henry outlined what these continental institutions meant when he first met the delegates from each colony.[283] 'The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more', he declared, 'I am not a Virginian, but an American.'[284] The most radical part of the Association, adopted in Congress on 20 October, was the eleventh article.[285] This section demanded that committees be chosen in 'every county, city, and town' by 'qualified representatives', and that any person who 'violated these associations' would have their name 'published in the gazette' so that 'such foes to the rights of British-America may be publicly known, and universally condemned as enemies of American liberty'.[286] In principle, the process of electing "associators" (a term that itself became popular amongst men and women) focused on qualifications, on one's merits as a supporter of the country's interests, as opposed to one's ability to leverage their wealth or birthright status for political office.[287] The second part of this article was equally significant. Besides trading with Britain, Virginian shopkeepers were attacked for raising their prices to 'the Prejudice of the poorer Sort of People', or for

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[281] See also the poem, published in both Virginia and Boston, 'A Lady's Adieu to Her Tea Table', *Virginia Gazette*, 20 January 1774, in *Virginia Historical Register and Literary Companion* 6 (October 1853), p. 214. My thanks to Evelyn Strope for bringing this source to my attention.

[282] Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, p. 128. For the importance of the Continental Congress in helping the colonists imagine themselves as "Americans," see Irvin, *Clothed in Robes of Sovereignty*, p. 20.

[283] Town Meeting in Boston, 13 May 1774, in Peter Force, ed., *American Archives: Consisting of. Collection of Authentick Records, State Papers, Debates, and Letters and other Notices of Publick Affairs*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1837-1853), p. 329.

[284] John A. Ragosta, *Patrick Henry: Proclaiming a Revolution* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), p. 5.

[285] Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, p. 167.

[286] The Association of the First Continental Congress, 20 October 1774, in Hermann Wellenreuther, ed., *The Revolution of the People: Thoughts and Documents on the Revolutionary Process in North America, 1774-1776* (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2006), p. 145.

[287] 'A Real Associator', in *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), 29 December 1774 ("men"); Martha Jaquelin to John Norton, 14 August 1769, in Lyon G. Tyler, ed., *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, vol. 3 (Richmond: Richmond Press, 1922), p. 292 ("women").

raising sentiments that attacked the committee's extra-legal justice.[288] In short, they were persecuted for not acting as true "Americans."

One of the most prominent displays of committee justice was in Yorktown on 7 November. A group of locals boarded the ship *Virginia* after it was found to contain two half chests of tea imported by the Yorktown agent John Hatley Norton. These Virginians made sure that the 'Tea had met with its deserved fate', as one committeeman proudly declared.[289] In an incident similar to the "tea party" at Boston, the men dragged the tea from the ship's hold and cast it into the river.[290] For his indiscretions, Norton was accused of infringing the 'Rights and Liberties of America' and the elder merchant John Norton in London was forced to apologise in the *Virginia Gazette*.[291] Those who neither spoke nor behaved as "Americans" were condemned as enemies to their "country," that word now meaning the thirteen colonies – and not the British Empire – as a whole.

The Response to "American"

Due to these intimidation tactics, the "Americans" had their detractors both at home and abroad. The British were frustrated with the Associations and a London print, published on 16 February 1775, mocked the "Alternative of Williams-Burg." In the print, seen in Figure 12, a merchant is forced to sign the association over a barrel of tobacco – a barrel that was "A Present For John Wilkes, Esqr." In the background, looming ominously above the crowd, stand a set of gallows. Emblazoned with the phrase "A Cure For the Refractory," the gallows support a bag of feathers and a barrel of tar used to humiliate disaffected persons. In the image, women, black men, and children stare down the traitors in their midst. This British anger directed at the Committees was also reflected in the colonies. When faced with coercion, some preferred neutrality. In Loudoun County, Virginia, only 51 persons – three per cent of the County's entire population – signed the resolves in support of the Continental Association.[292] Their opposition

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[288] Association of the First Congress, 20 October 1774, in Wellenreuther, ed., *Revolution of the People*, p. 133.

[289] 'A Daring Insult upon the People of This Colony', 7 November 1774, in *Scribner and Tarter*, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 163.

[290] The problems inherent to the term "Tea Party," which was first used in the early nineteenth century, are discussed in Young, *Shoemaker*, p. 155.

[291] John Norton to the Inhabitants of Virginia: A Whiggish Postscript, 16 January 1775, in *Scribner and Tarter*, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 2, p. 238-239. The public apologies are discussed in Mary Beth Norton, 'The Seventh Tea Ship', *William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (October 2016), p. 709.

[292] Michael A. McDonnell, 'The Struggle Within: Colonial Politics on the Eve of Independence', in Gray and Kamensky, *Revolution*, pp. 107-108. McDonnell also notes that in Westchester County, New York, only about one hundred stood in favour of the continental boycotts. (*Ibid*., p. 108.)

to the Continental Associations, though limited, was reflected in other counties. John Hook, who ran a profitable store in Bedford County, Virginia, pivoted between neutrality and outright resistance. 'If I said there never would be peace till the Americans get well flog'd', Hook declared in June 1775, 'I meant to say the Bostonians; I am loath to contradict…[his accusers] but think…[they] must be mistaken as to the word American, it has allways been my opinion since the beginning of this unhappy dispute, the Bostonians did not behave well in Destroying the Tea and that it is wrong to take a Brothers part under those circumstances, it was on this Principle that I wished them a scourging and not from any Enmity to the Liberties of America.'[293] Hook was wary of being tarred with the same "Bostonian" brush. He was an early example of how Virginians and other colonists manipulated epithets in order to remain neutral. As early as 1774, the local divisions that continued to plague the self-declared "Americans" were already beginning to show.

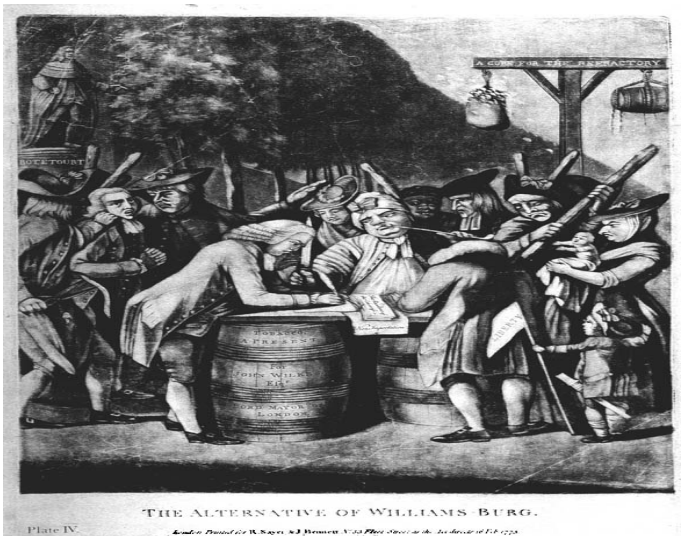

Figure 12: The alternative of Williams-burg, printed in London for R. Sayer and J. Bennett on 16 February 1775. Source: Library of Congress.

Given the longstanding tensions between the Virginian colonists and indigenous peoples, it was perhaps unsurprising that the "Independent Companies," those units established to crush the disaffection shown above, based their "Americanness" on anti-Indianness.[294] Intended to be the sword and shield of the Associations, the Virginia Convention, founded after Dunmore dissolved the House of Burgesses, established these units because of fears that

[293] 'John Hook as a Loyalist', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 33, no. 4 (October 1925), p. 400. For John Hook and his business operations, see Ann Smart Martin, *Buying into the World of Goods: Early Consumers in Backcountry Virginia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

[294] For anti-Indianness, see Jill Lepore, *Name of War*; and Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*.

Dunmore was going to use the Shawnee to crush the "Americans."[295] They felt 'a well[-]regulated militia, composed of Gentlemen and Yeomen, is the natural strength, and only security of a free government'.[296] The inhabitants of Fairfax County may have established the first company on 21 September 1774.[297] 'In this Time of extreme Danger', they resolved, 'with an Indian Enemy in our Country, and threat'ned with the Destruction of our Civil-rights, & Liberty…we will form ourselves into a Company, not exceeding one hundred Men, by the Name of the Fairfax independant Company of Voluntiers.'[298] These units were popular. The committees in each county formed twenty-seven of these companies to fight disaffected enemies and Indian peoples.[299] "Either liberty or death" was one company's motto – and that choice faced Virginians who wanted to oppose the companies.[300] Dressed in hunting shirts, caps, and wielding tomahawks, these 'resolute, & invincible Natives of the Woods of America' resolved to banish their enemies from Virginia.[301] Indeed, in June 1775 the Albermarle Company of Volunteers declared, in religious language not dissimilar to the prints encouraging inhabitants to show "patriotism," that 'every apostate to the American cause should be properly stigmatized.'[302] These threats only got worse as relations soured between Britain and the thirteen colonies. At the Virginia Convention in April 1775, the firebrand politician Patrick Henry reportedly declared that 'there was no Englishmen, no Scots, no Britons, but a set of wretches sunk in Luxury, they had lost their native courage and [are] unable to look the brave Americans in the face.'[303] The crisis had started with the partisans trying to profess themselves as the best British subjects. The end of that period, and the beginning of the war between the colonies and Great Britain, saw the "Americans" arguing that they were completely distinct from corrupted Britons.

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[295] William E. White, 'The Independent Companies of Virginia, 1774-1775', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 86, no. 2 (April 1978), p. 150.

[296] 'Resolutions of the Provincial Congress of Virginia', 23 March 1775, *Avalon Project*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/res_cong_va_1775.asp>, accessed 24 February 2018.

[297] White, 'Independent Companies', p. 151.

[298] Fairfax Independent Company to George Washington, 25 April 1775, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Colonial Series*, vol. 10, p. 344.

[299] White, 'Independent Companies', p. 151.

[300] *Ibid*., p. 152.

[301] 30 May 1775, in Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Leonidas Dodson, eds., *Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776: Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934), p. 25.

[302] Charles Lewis, George Gilmer, and John Marks to the Albermarle Independent Company of Volunteers, 2 June 1775, in R. A. Brock, ed., 'Gilmer Papers', *Collections of the Virginia Historical Society: Miscellaneous Papers, 1672-1865*, vol. 6 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1887), p. 82.

[303] James Parker to Charles Steuart, 6 April 1775, in Abbatt, ed., 'Letters', *Magazine*, p. 155.

Conclusion

The partisans increasingly viewed Dunmore as one of those British enemies. On 19 April 1775 – the same day as the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts, which began the war between the thirteen colonies and Great Britain – the governor heard of an 'insurrection in a neighbouring county'.[304] Fearing the worst, Dunmore sent British troops to remove the gunpowder from the magazine in Williamsburg. Virginians were outraged. Without gunpowder, they felt exposed to an enslaved insurrection.[305] With the Independent Companies surrounding the governor's mansion in Williamsburg, Dunmore fled with his family for the James River and then to Norfolk on 8 June to begin a counter-revolt against partisan rule. The removal of Dunmore from office signalled the end of a period where the colonial protestors looked to reclaim their subject rights and belonging within the British Empire. The revolution in epithets had already occurred before the colonists had rid themselves of Dunmore. The colonists had revitalised and invented a number of epithets, including "patriot," "white person," "whig," "tory," "British American," and "American." Self-described "patriots" declared that they were the defenders of the empire; "British Americans" fought to maintain their dual loyalties; "white person" became a source of tension as the colonists argued that Indian peoples were not true subjects; and "whig" and "tory" were redefined in order to contest who was the inheritor of the legacy of the Glorious Revolution. These epithets had long histories, but many of these terms had fallen out of favour because of their association with political corruption. In an environment where the partisans ensured that merit underpinned who could use these epithets, the partisans used these labels to fight for their rights as British subjects, build bonds of belonging around their newfound status as "Americans," and frame their disaffected enemies as traitors.

Dunmore's removal from office signified an uptick in tensions. The war over words had become an actual conflict as Virginia descended into an internal power struggle that could be described as a "civil war," a conflict between inhabitants of the same state. Not knowing whom they could trust, Virginians began to assess people on the warmth of their political opinions. What one did, and the "heat" one showed in support of the partisan cause, mattered more than ever before. Consequently, Virginians radicalised epithets. The terms "riflemen," "Yankee," "friend of government," "rebel," "insurgent," and "savage" all underwent such a

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[304] Governor Dunmore to the Municipal Common Hall, 20 April 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 55. For the gunpowder affair, see David, *Dunmore's New World*, pp. 94-95.

[305] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 52-53.

change. Although the partisans continued to find the words to discuss who they were, with “riflemen” and “Yankee” entering their vocabulary of allegiances, the disaffected also formed their own epithets, with the term “friend of government” joining the word “tory” as political labels that were increasingly used to distinguish themselves from their enemies. The principle that continued to underpin this war over words was that of merit. Those who were deemed unworthy of being “riflemen” or “Yankees” were cast as “parricides”; those colonists who resisted their king were called “rebels” and “savages”; and the “friends of government” continued to attack their enemies for their “enthusiasm.” The civil war period, then, was a continuation of the forces let loose during the imperial crisis. As Virginia entered a civil war with Dunmore, the partisans had to reckon with the choices made and the revolution in epithets and belonging that they had caused whilst the British flag still flew over Williamsburg.

Chapter 2

"Dirty Shirts," "Sheep Stealers," and "Unnatural Rebels": Radicalising Epithets during Virginia's Civil War, 1775-76

Introduction

'Have you got any dirty shirts here?...I want your dirty shirts.'[1] That was the opening line of a black soldier, 'dressed up in a full suit of British regiments, and armed with a gun', to the Virginia widow Helen Maxwell, who was staying with a friend just outside of Norfolk.[2] This man was not looking for laundry. In her recollections to her son decades after the event, Maxwell made clear that "dirty shirts" was 'the name by which our soldiers were known'.[3] She was indignant. 'No', Maxwell dismissively responded, 'we have no dirty shirts here.'[4] 'But you have', the black soldier defiantly shot back, 'and I will find them.'[5] The man eventually left after searching the home but promised to return. Resolving to leave the house before that 'horrid wretch', as Maxwell called the soldier, returned, she travelled to Norfolk to report this case.[6] Dunmore explained that her situation was not unusual. 'It was but the other day', the former governor noted, 'that one of them undertook to impersonate Capt. Squires, and actually extorted a sum of money from a lady in his name.'[7] The black soldier's indiscretions against white Virginian authority were numerous. These misdeeds were perhaps why Maxwell remembered this story decades later. He carried a gun (black persons were not allowed to carry firearms); rather than the coarse osnaburg of enslaved persons, he wore a regimental uniform, a proud symbol of the British redcoats; and he had insulted a white woman (an act charged with racist stereotypes of black men's proclivity for sexual assaulting whites).[8] But one of his most significant acts was telling. In a colony where more than 180,000 enslaved Virginians could not even choose their own names, he had appropriated "rifleman," an epithet used to

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1 My Mother, in Edward W. James, ed., *The Lower Norfolk Virginia Antiquary*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Friedenwald Company, 1897), p. 134.
2 *Ibid*.
3 *Ibid*.
4 *Ibid*.
5 *Ibid*.
6 *Ibid*.
7 *Ibid*.
8 'An Act for the better regulating and disciplining the Militia', 1755, in William Waller Hening, eds., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619*, vol. 1 (New York, 1823), p. 95 ("gun"); Haulman, *Politics of Fashion*, p. 154 ("regimental"); Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, p. 208 ("stereotypes").

describe the ideal "American" soldier.[9] The notion of black men contesting the words used to describe 'our soldiers' was proof, to Maxwell at least, that the world had gone topsy-turvy.[10]

Early Americanists have used these stories of dissidence as proof of the fall of deferential authority – the polite submission of the common folk to their social betters – and the rise of a more egalitarian relationship between rulers and ruled in the thirteen colonies. Woody Holton and other scholars have principally focused on Virginia in their studies. Due to Virginia's entrenched, oligarchical elite, historians have often made the start of the war between the colonies and Britain in April 1775 a watershed moment in the erosion of gentry authority.[11] Michael A. McDonnell argues that the 'transition from a deferential to a more republican political culture was forged and fueled by conflict, not consensus.'[12] British historians have drawn similar conclusions. Dror Wahrman argues that the 'dangers of levelling' had unsettled the very nature of identity.[13] There are problems with this narrative. The conflict in Norfolk, between Dunmore's forces and the Virginian partisans, is often marginalised in these accounts of political, social, and cultural change. In Holton's work, Norfolk is only mentioned because of Dunmore's proclamation in November 1775, which emancipated enslaved persons and servants held by "rebels."[14] One reason for this problem may be that the Norfolk residents are often typecast as 'a small band of loyalists' confronting a 'much larger group of patriots'.[15] Adele Hast, who has written the only local study of the conflict, also refers to these colonists as "loyalists."[16]

The intercepted letters from the area suggest that historians should take these disaffected persons more seriously. Their letters, which the local Committees of Safety – partisan-led organisations that administrated the colony – collected to understand the inhabitants' opinions and British troop movements, regularly mention fears that the "riflemen" would burn Norfolk and Portsmouth, a neighbouring town, to the ground.[17] Through an

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9 Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 145 ("180,000"); Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Books, 2006), p. 26 ("their own names").

10 My Mother, in James, ed., *Norfolk Antiquary*, vol. 2, p. 134.

11 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, ch. 4; Holton, *Forced Founders*, ch. 7; Tillson, Jr., *Accommodating Revolutions*, ch. 2; and Isaac, *Transformation*, ch. 8.

12 Michael A. McDonnell, 'Popular Mobilization and Political Culture in Revolutionary Virginia: The Failure of the Minutemen and the Revolution from Below', *Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (December 1998), p. 951.

13 Wahrman, 'English Problem of Identity', p. 1250.

14 Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 116 ('debts') and 159 ('proclamation').

15 *Ibid*., p. 208.

16 Hast, *Loyalism*, p. 3.

17 For histories that mention the fire threats but do not center them, see McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 138-139; and Selby, *Revolution*, p. 59. Letters were also intercepted by the British authorities. This was done in order to gain information on troop movements and political opinions in the colonies. See Julie M. Flavell,

analysis of these letters, this chapter reveals the Janus-faced consequences to the decline of deference: that this shift allowed ordinary people to question their rulers and push for equality, yet the new hierarchical ideals that accompanied this change justified violent acts in a destructive civil war in southeastern Virginia.

Rather than framing Maxwell's story as proof of a growing equality in Virginia, this chapter places the "dirty shirts" account into a wider war over words that erupted after the start of the conflict between Britain and the thirteen colonies. This period of civil war, of conflict between subjects of the British Empire from the Battles at Lexington and Concord in April 1775 until independence in July 1776, radicalised a number of epithets that were used to determine who was on the side of right or wrong in the contest. "Riflemen," "Yankee," "friend of government," "rebel," "insurgent," and "savage" all became prominent labels. Continuing from the convention established in the imperial crisis, these epithets were based on merit – a principle that continued to be bitterly contested in the early war years. If deferential epithets, such as "gentlemen" fell in usage, as the historians above argue, then the partisans and their enemies introduced new forms of oppression and power. The concept of merit partly underpinned a turn toward different forms of hierarchy than deference. Whilst marginalised peoples had been able to use epithets in the imperial crisis, the early war years were – somewhat ironically given the emphasis on equality in the historiography – a period of white, male backlash when marginalised peoples were largely excluded from the usage of epithets, particularly on the grounds of race, gender, and allegiances. Only those who were deemed to be "warm" in their political opinions, the partisans declared, were worthy of calling themselves "patriots," "Americans," and – if they were the most venerable of the partisan forces – "riflemen." Those who were cooler in their opinions were labelled as "parricides" and "tories." The partisans did not get their own way in the politics of epithets though. As with the black soldier mentioned above, Norfolk and Portsmouth's inhabitants, who preferred the title "friends of government," attacked the partisans as disorderly "shirtmen." The growing tensions between both sides led to an increased usage of "rebel" and "insurgent." These tensions eventually exploded as the combatants condemned each other as "savages," as persons without a shred of humanity. This rhetorical conflict set the stage for the equally violent struggle over epithets after independence.

'Government Interception of Letters from America and the Quest for Colonial Opinion in 1775', *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (April 2001), pp. 403-430.

Rifleman and Yankee

The Partisans' Glorification of the "Riflemen"

If the "Americans" were to distinguish themselves from their British enemies, as they had begun to do during the imperial crisis, then they needed role models to follow. The "rifleman," a homespun-wearing soldier capable of discriminate violence at long distance, has become the ideal "patriot" in the historiography.[18] The Virginian partisans may not have been displeased with that outcome. Though the British also increasingly used this epithet to condemn the partisans for their hit-and-run tactics, Figure 13 shows that the term "rifleman" exploded into use as Britain's opponents idolised their rifle-wielding soldiers. The Continental Congress was particularly enamoured with the "riflemen." In one of its first acts relating to the Continental Army, the Congress called in June 1775 for six new companies of 'expert riflemen' from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.[19] Yet much of the partisans' glorification of the "riflemen" was done to cover up the militia and army's failures of organisation and mobilisation. In fact, militiamen regularly turned up to musters with canes and cornstalks, rather than guns (let alone rifles).[20] The newspapers highlighted the "riflemen's" merits, then, to make a point. These 'expert riflemen' first emphasised their merit through their skill in combat.[21] The Virginian soldier Daniel Morgan became famous after his rifle company raced a neighbouring group to George Washington's base of operations at Cambridge, Massachusetts, a distance of over six hundred miles.[22] And two of Morgan's soldiers, the *Virginia Gazette* reported, had at a 'distance of 200 yards…shot into the same hole, in a paper not bigger than a dollar'.[23] Besides these acts of skill, the "riflemen" emphasised their merit through their outfits. On 18 May 1775, a group of Philadelphian soldiers declared that, in order to separate friends from enemies, they must 'adopt of themselves an uniform for the whole city'.[24] They chose the 'HUNTING SHIRT', which would 'level all distinctions' because it 'is

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[18] For an example of the literature on "riflemen," see Don Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan: Revolutionary Rifleman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013 [1961]).

[19] 14 June 1775, in Worthington Chauncey Ford and Herbert Putnam, eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 89.

[20] Saul Cornell, *A Well-Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 123.

[21] 14 June 1775, in Ford and Putnam, eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 2, p. 89.

[22] Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), pp. 102-103.

[23] *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 17 November 1775.

[24] To the Associations of the City of Philadelphia, 18 May 1775, in Steve Rosswurm, ed., 'Equality and Justice: Documents from Philadelphia's Popular Revolution', *Pennsylvania History* 52, no. 4 (October 1985), p. 255.

within the compass of almost *every* person's ability' to wear this attire.[25] The partisans' choice of clothing, which emphasised the fact that meritorious support for the cause was not beyond any person's ability, did not go unnoticed. Dunmore recognised the politicisation of homespun too. On the advice of the Portsmouth merchant John Schaw, the former governor arrested the shirt-wearing Alexander Main.[26] For the partisans, the wearing of homespun separated virtuous inhabitants from the supporters of Great Britain.

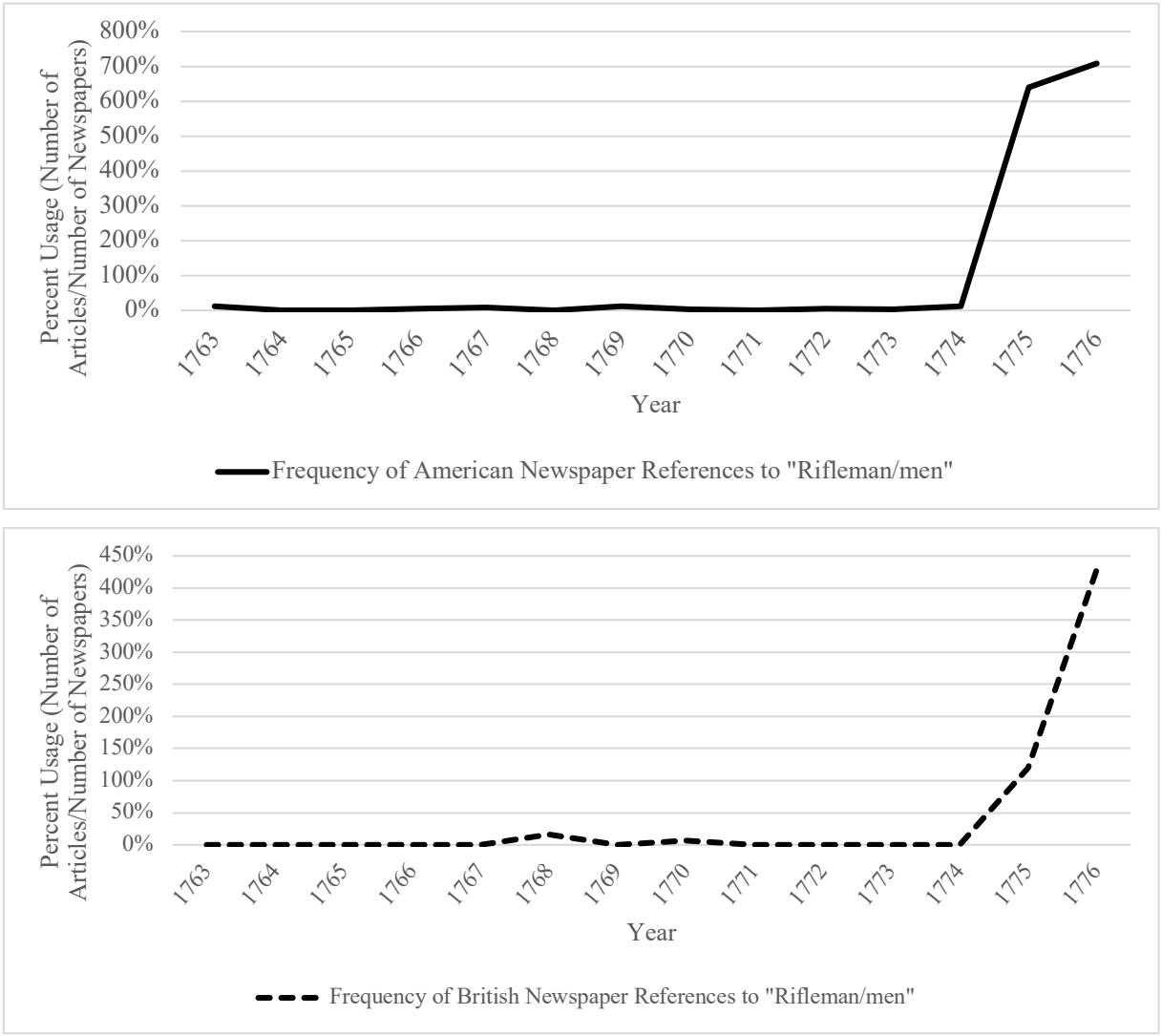

Figure 13: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Rifleman/men," 1763-1776.

The Importance of Religion and Virtue to "Riflemen"

[25] *Ibid*., pp. 255-256.
[26] An Officious Pointing Out, 8 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 406.

Besides their skill in combat, these "riflemen" were energised by their belief that God was on their side. To the Virginian partisans, the war against Britain was not a criminal act because the alternative to fighting – political enslavement – was a fate deemed worse than death. The colonists were fighting a just war of self-preservation.[27] That theme of martyrdom was present in one incident on 16 September 1775. En route to Canada, which the partisans invaded to neutralise the local French and Indian populace, Daniel Morgan, the "riflemen," and other Continental Army soldiers stopped to hear a sermon at a Presbyterian meetinghouse in Newburyport, Massachusetts.[28] The local Reverend Samuel Spring was at the pulpit. Standing above the tomb of George Whitefield, the English minister who had sparked the colonial religious revivals of the 1740s, Spring enjoined the soldiers (with many "riflemen" among them) that, in the words of Moses, 'If the spirit go not with us, carry us not up hence.'[29] If God was not on the partisans' side, Spring declared, the cause was doomed. The soldiers were willing to improve their odds of divine favour. After Spring's sermon, a group of soldiers, including Morgan, convinced the preacher to visit Whitefield's coffin. In an ironic act (given that the Canadian invasion was meant to subdue "idolatrous" French Catholics), the soldiers took Whitefield's collar and wristbands, cut them into small pieces, and then distributed the relics amongst themselves.[30] Unfortunately for the soldiers, these relics did not bring them success. The Canadian campaign was a disaster that led to the death of General Richard Montgomery, the commanding officer of the invading partisan forces, on 31 December 1775.[31] But the more important message was that the soldiers saw God on their side against the British. As the English plantation tutor Philip Vickers Fithian, then serving in the Continental Army, argued, since 'Heaven is the Prize for which we all contend', there was no more glorious way to reach that end than with an 'English Bullet lodged in our Heart'.[32] For this band of rifle-wielding soldiers, the choice to die for the cause rather than be consigned to slavery under Great Britain was the mark of a "rifleman."

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[27] Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 15-16.

[28] Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005 [1982]), p. 304 ("French"); Royster, *Revolutionary People*, pp. 23-24 ("sermon").

[29] *Ibid*., p. 24.

[30] Robert E. Cray, Jr., 'Memorialization and Enshrinement: George Whitefield and Popular Religious Culture, 1770-1850', *Journal of the Early Republic* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1990), p. 349.

[31] Amy Noel Ellison, 'Montgomery's Misfortune: The American Defeat at Quebec and the March toward Independence, 1775-1776', *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2017), pp. 591-616.

[32] 13 November 1775, in Albion and Dodson, eds., *Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776*, p. 131.

Certain that God was on their side, the "riflemen" and the press who covered their exploits highlighted their virtuous masculinity as an example to all partisans. From Philadelphia to Virginia, the newspapers were filled with adulation about the 'stout fellows', and 'active, brave young fellows' in the rifle companies 'who', as the *Pennsylvania Packet* reported on 28 August 1775, 'appear as if they were entirely unacquainted with, and had never felt, the passion of fear.'[33] The reputation of these "fellows" for fearlessness and control of masculine passions was an overemphasised representation of the military situation. Most of the New England regiments deserted George Washington and the Continental Army after their enlistments had expired. The "riflemen," who were on one-year enlistments, remained on the field.[34] These loyal soldiers displayed their masculinity through performance. Intent on "playing Indian" to scare their enemies, they wore native face paint, danced, and used an 'Indian war [w]hoop' to terrify their enemies.[35] The *Packet* noted an incident in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where the "riflemen" stripped 'naked to the waist and painted like savages (except the Captain [Michael Cresap], who was in an Indian [homespun] shirt) indulged a vast concourse of the inhabitants with a perfect exhibition of a war dance, and all the man[o]euvers of Indians holding council, going to war, circumventing their enemies, by defiles, ambuscades, attacking, [and] scalping.'[36] This performance was not a display of empathy with Indian men. In the same town where the "Paxton Boys" had murdered indigenous persons, the partisans rehabilitated frontier inhabitants like Michael Cresap, who led this rifle company, from "Indian killers" to glorious "Americans."[37] Even the worst of the Virginian colonists, the rangers, who operated in Indian wars as scouts and marauders, and paid by the colonial assemblies through scalp bounties, were idolised in the newspapers. One writer to the *Virginia Gazette*, responding to a "True Patriot," signalled his higher virtue as a "Ranger."[38] The glorification of rangers and "riflemen" was not accidental. The "white person's" cause in the western counties of Virginia, and the attitude of martial superiority that came with this view, was now seen as the cause of all true "Americans."

The Further Gendered and Racial Inflections to "Rifleman"

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33 *Constitutional Gazette*, 9 August 1775 ('stout'); *Pennsylvania Packet*, 28 August 1775 ('brave').
34 Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, p. 102.
35 *Constitutional Gazette*, 9 August 1775.
36 *Pennsylvania Packet*, 28 August 1775.
37 For the glorification of frontier people, see Robert G. Parkinson, 'From Indian Killer to Worthy Citizen: The Revolutionary Transformation of Michael Cresap', *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (January 2006), pp. 97-122; and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 264.
38 Ranger to a True Patriot, 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 181.

Alongside this racial hostility to Indians, the glorification of the "riflemen" also had gendered consequences. It subsumed the important acts of women and female productivity within an epithet that celebrated the "rifleman" as the pinnacle of masculinity. Whilst the Daughters of Liberty had called themselves "female patriots" during the imperial crisis, the war was not seen as the appropriate time to restrain masculine authority. The conflict was widely seen in male partisan circles as a moment for togetherness and unity.[39] The hunting shirt symbolised that sense of unity. Figure 14 is an example of the homespun shirt as the partisans would have wanted: pure-white, a colour associated with social distinction, and textured with fringes that allowed the garment to shed rain whilst the "riflemen" were on campaign.[40] The "rifleman" was never depicted as a dirty frontiersman. He was dressed to impress all who saw him.

Yet the hunting shirt was not his production. This garment was the hidden product of women's labour. Women-family members, servants, and enslaved women spun the cloth, sewed the shirts, and kept them clean. The purposeful omission of female labour and productivity can also be found in the public papers. The partisan newspapers, desperate to show unity, noted how, when the rifle companies passed by towns, 'a number of people were employed in baking bread for them to take on their march'.[41] The image of the "goodwife" who supported the troops was another way for the colonists to juxtapose their productive womenfolk with British women, who were often labelled as "strumpets" or prostitutes.[42] In contradistinction to these luxurious British women, the partisans argued that the colonial "goodwife" was an important source of support for the "riflemen."[43] The political opinions of the many "deputy husbands" who spun these shirts and baked bread were forgotten in the process.[44]

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[39] Alfred F. Young, '"Persons of Consequence": The Women of Boston and the Making of the American Revolution, 1765-1776', in *idem*., *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 132.

[40] Kathleen M. Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 26-27.

[41] *Constitutional Gazette*, 9 August 1775.

[42] Haulman, *Politics of Fashion*, p. 174.

[43] Brown, *Foul Bodies*, p. 30.

[44] Ulrich, *Good Wives*, pp. 37-38.

Figure 14: Fringed hunting shirts, like this one, were worn by the "riflemen." Source: Museum of the American Revolution.

Of course, it was rifles, commonly used in Indian conflicts, that distinguished the "riflemen." Guns were important symbols of power and authority for the white, Protestant male subject. The English Bill of Rights in 1689 determined that 'the Subjects which are Protestants may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions and as allowed by Law.'[45] The right to bear arms was seen as a collective initiative. If the gun was an important symbol of common safety, though, the rifle was doubly significant. Unlike the majority of guns, which were made overseas, the Pennsylvania (later Kentucky) rifle, famed for its range and accuracy, was designed in the colonies and used for Indian wars.[46] This uniquely "American" weapon, seen in Figure 15, was the perfect tool for the ideal "American" soldier. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Independent Companies had marched on Williamsburg after Dunmore's aborted attempt to seize the gunpowder.[47] The politician James Madison thought the "riflemen" were the answer. In the same letter where he noted that, without guns and powder, Virginians were exposed to an uprising of enslaved people, he expressed his belief that the 'strength of this Colony will lie chiefly in the rifle-men of the Upland Counties'.[48] After using their rifles to defend whites peoples' supremacy over black and Indian persons, the "riflemen" next had a chance to use the tools of their violent trade against the British at Hampton in Virginia's southeast on 27 October 1775. The British had landed their soldiers there in order to reclaim property swept onto the beaches during a hurricane.[49] But the militiamen were waiting in the

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45 'Bill of Rights', *NA*, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/WillandMarSess2/1/2/introduction>, accessed 10 December 2018. See Cornell, *A Well-Regulated Militia*, p. 12.

46 John W. Wright, 'The Rifle in the American Revolution', *American Historical Review* 29, no. 2 (January 1924), p. 294.

47 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 50-51.

48 James Madison to William Bradford, 19 June 1775, in William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 153.

49 Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 134.

town, rifles at the ready. The *Virginia Gazette* reported that the 'musquet and rifle balls soon began to fly so thick that few men were seen upon the decks [of the British ships].'[50] The writer declared that the inhabitants had 'acted with a spirit becoming freemen and Americans, and must evince that Americans will die, or be free!'[51] Hearing these stories of success, George Washington recommended in his July 1776 general orders that all troops dress and behave as "riflemen." This act, he argued, would 'carry no small terror to the enemy, who think every such person a complete marksman.'[52] The epithet "rifleman" had come to signify the ideal freeborn "American."

Figure 15: Southern long rifle. Source: Colonial Williamsburg.

The Rise of "Yankee"

The partisans ensured that the epithet "Yankee" also became synonymous with a true "American." Yet, as Eran Zelnik has shown, the term "Yankee" did not begin as a term of endearment. The word was associated with the "Yankee Doodle," the colonial militiaman or "macaroni" who thought he was stylish because of the feather in his cap. This abuse had a long history, as a nickname for Dutch colonists along the Hudson River (the *Janke* or *Janneke*), through the War of Jenkins' Ear between Britain and Spain in 1739, and into the Seven Years' War, and the British soldier's antipathy towards the rustic militiaman showed no signs of abating.[53] Figure 16 shows a marked increase in the usage of "Yankee" as independence approached. Many of these newspaper articles carried similar sentiments to the soldiers who served with the militiamen in earlier wars against the French. 'This army [in Halifax] is healthy', wrote one British official in June 1776, '& very well inclined to make an Example of the Yankee Rebells.'[54] Some colonists joined the British in using "Yankee" as a pejorative. It

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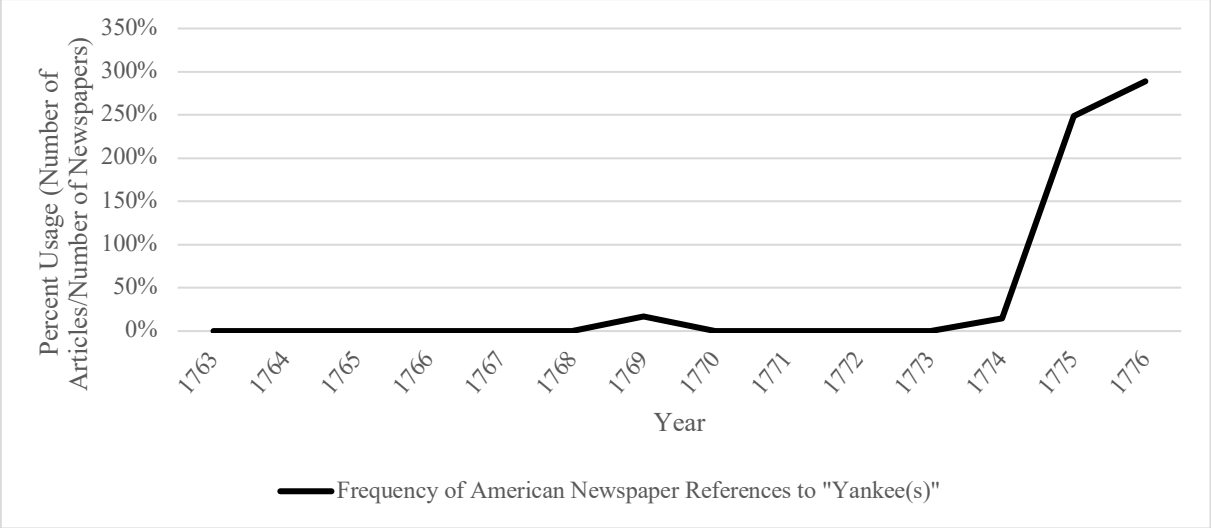
50 *Virginia Gazette* (Pinkney), 1 November 1775.
51 *Ibid*.
52 General Orders, 24 July 1776, in W. W. Abbot et al, eds., *The Papers of George Washington: Revolutionary War Series*, vol. 5 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 439-440.
53 Eran Zelnik, 'Yankees, Doodles, Fops, and Cuckolds: Compromised Manhood and Provincialism in the Revolutionary Period, 1740-1781', *Early American Studies* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2018), pp. 514-544.
54 James Grant to "Sir," 4 June 1776, in Alexander Wedderburn Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Box 1, Folder 10.

was often used to label people, especially New Englanders, who betrayed the partisan cause. The Virginian politician Arthur Lee was associated with a 1765 poem, "Oppression," which attacked a 'Portsmouth Yankey' as an 'alien upstart', 'cringing minion', 'mastiff', 'murderer', and 'knave'.[55] The "Yankee," then, especially in the southern colonies, was synonymous with a "tory." Ten years later, the opprobrium used against the "Yankees" remained undiminished. The Colony of New York, which, like Virginia, was under the threat of British attack, maintained a policy of strict neutrality until independence. The Bermuda politician Henry Tucker was less sympathetic to the New Yorkers' strategy. He condemned New York's neutrality with the phrase 'D[am]n those Y[ankee]s'.[56] The divisions between south and north were perhaps best illustrated in the Continental Army. George Washington had to intervene in one brawl as the 'quarrellsome Yankees', as Philip Vickers Fithian called the New Englanders, came to blows with Virginia's "riflemen."[57] The Continental Army, supposedly exemplifying the unity of the partisan cause, was itself a hotbed of regional tensions.



[55] *Oppression. A Poem. By an American. With Notes, by a North Briton* (London, 1765), p. 11.
[56] Henry Tucker to St. George Tucker, 30 October 1774, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 2, Folder 11.
[57] 20 July 1775, in Albion and Dodson, eds., *Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776*, p. 65.

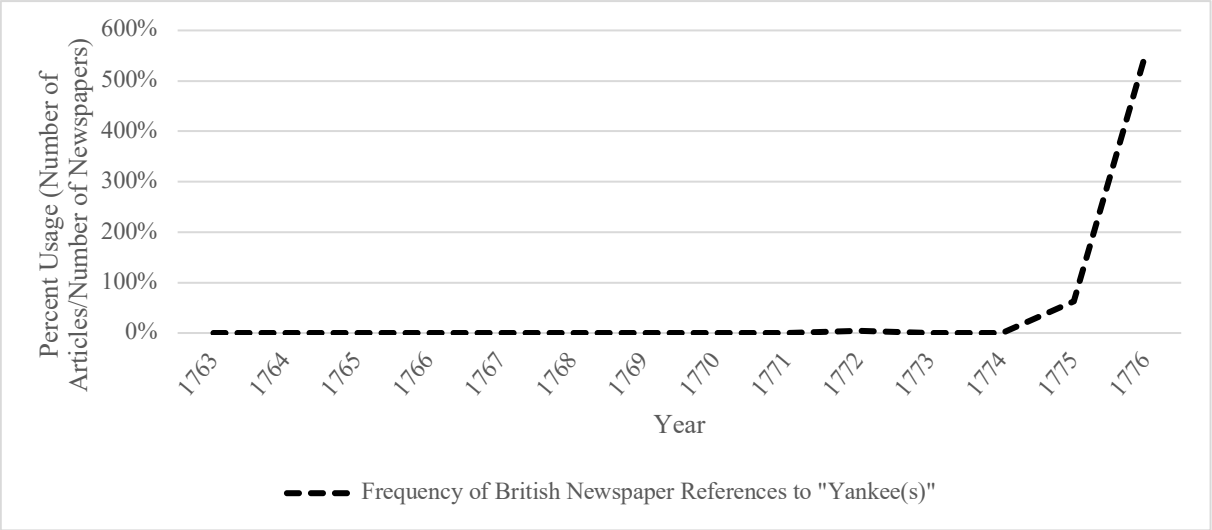


Figure 16: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Yankee(s)," 1763-1776.

Immediately before independence, "Yankee" became associated with a true supporter of the partisan cause. Figure 16 shows the partisans' growing support for that epithet. This more positive attitude to "Yankee" may have been more felt amongst the common folk in Virginia. Whilst a number of the writers cited above were educated elites, ordinary colonists were more prepared to celebrate their rustic provincialism. As "good wives" were contrasted with "strumpets," the partisans compared the British-supporting "fop" or cuckold to the manly "Yankee."[58] This masculine foundation to "Yankee" was reinforced with popular myths. Stories began to emerge that the word "Yankee" was derived from the term "Yankoo," the name used by an apparently ferocious nation of Indians.[59] These European-descended "Yankees" were determined to be similarly ferocious to their enemies. The "Yankee" became synonymous with the "rough music" – the Charivari, or mock parade – that was performed when expelling unwanted persons from the community.[60] Few had forgotten the actions of John Schaw, the merchant guilty of reporting a shirt-wearing "patriot" to Dunmore. Schaw was expelled from Norfolk in August 1775 and the soundtrack to his humiliation was the 'tune of Yankee Doodle, as played by the Fifer he had caused to be apprehended'.[61] The epithet 'Little General', which Schaw apparently went by, had gone from a term of deference – military titles such as "colonel" or "general" were marks of social distinction in this period – into a phrase of

58 Zelnik, 'Yankees', p. 531.
59 'Etymology of the Word Yankee', *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia), 25 May 1775.
60 Zelnik, 'Yankees', p. 533. For the English tradition of "rough music," a form of riot, see Alfred F. Young, 'English Plebeian Culture and Eighteenth-Century American Radicalism', in Margaret C. Jacob and James R. Jacob, eds., *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), pp. 185–212.
61 'Retirement of the Little General', 11 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 420.

derision for his indiscretions against Virginians' wishes.[62] '[C]hoosing to retire from his honourable post', the story continued, Schaw escaped into the house of a local alderman.[63] 'Great persuasions were used with the people to disperse', the report read, 'with but to no purpose; till at length three gentlemen offered themselves as securities, that they would see the General (who had been all this while endeavouring to get up a chimney) should be forthcoming and delivered into the hands of the Committee at eight o'clock next day.'[64] Virginia's ruling class were forced to endear themselves to ordinary people who, beyond calling for equality, came up with new titles for the supporters of the partisan cause and its enemies.[65]

Political Polarisation in Virginia

Besides the terms used for one's friends, the more violent times in Virginia also brought increasingly radicalised epithets against one's enemies. "Tory" did not diminish in usage as an epithet for the partisans' enemies, but it was accompanied by a far harsher term that rose to prominence in the early war years: "parricide." This epithet had two definitions: someone who killed a near relative or someone who betrayed their country. These meanings were interlinked since "patriot" was derived from the Latin word *patria*, meaning "fatherland." Natural rights, the right of someone to the product of their own labour, were not enough to ensure that people had a right to live in America. They also had to remain loyal to their friends and neighbours. Edmund Pendleton also used the word "parricide" in his correspondence.[66] Dunmore had blockaded the Chesapeake Bay from trade and made sure that no supplies reached the colonists. Pendleton fumed: 'A villain has given Lord Dunmore information of it [a shipment of goods]', he wrote to the Virginian congressman Richard Henry Lee on 15 October 1775, '[…] What can such a parricide deserve?'[67] This language escalated in tone after one misunderstanding in Virginia's southeast. A significant proportion of the populace, though many were supportive of the partisans, was not interested in fighting the British Empire.[68] John Holton, who printed the *Norfolk Intelligencer*, was the exception to this rule. He had accused Dunmore of traitorous

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[62] *Ibid*. ('Little General'); Norman H. Dawes, 'Titles as Symbols of Prestige in Seventeenth-Century New England', *William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (January 1949), p. 78 ("military titles").
[63] 'Retirement', 11 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 420.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 132.
[66] For this term's use in Pennsylvania, too, see Knouff, *Soldiers' Revolution*, p. 196.
[67] Edmund Pendleton to Richard Henry Lee, 15 October 1775, in David John Mays, ed., *The Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton, 1734-1803*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), p. 121.
[68] Hast, *Loyalism*, p, 46.

and piratical acts.[69] In response to these defamatory accusations, and without meeting any resistance from the local townsfolk, British troops seized Holt's press on 22 October 1775.[70] On hearing of this incident, Richard Henry Lee wrote to Washington that the inhabitants failed to act because 'none but Tories & Negroes remained behind.'[71] 'Virginia is much incensed', he wrote, 'and 500 are ordered immediately down to Norfolk. I expect, by every Post, to hear of the demolition of that infamous [snake's] nest of Tories.'[72] Thomas Jefferson reacted in a similar fashion to Lee. He used the example of Rome's war with Carthage – a conflict that had become a metaphor for treachery – to explain what should be done to a town infested with "tories."[73] 'DELENDA EST NORFOLK', he wrote. Norfolk must be destroyed.[74]

Lee and Jefferson's threats signalled that Virginians were now being assessed for the "warmth" or "heat" of their political opinions. Calling oneself a "whig," "patriot," or "rifleman" no longer assured the radicals of one's loyalty. Virginians also had to act the part. Nicole Eustace notes that "warmth" was used for someone deeply engrossed in party politics.[75] Only those persons who warmly supported the "Common Cause" were held up as "patriots." This polarised state of political affairs affected anyone who wished to remain neutral. A few months before the British landed at Hampton, the merchant Charles Duncan's partner and servants were forced 'by the 'Gentlemen who commands the Voluntier Company in the said Country to enlist as Soldiers therein, under pain of incurring the displeasure of the said Company, and being treated as enemies to the Country'.[76] Seeking to avoid being labelled an "enemy of the country," Duncan swiftly contacted the county committee and received an exemption from military service.[77] Other inhabitants pivoted. In January 1776, Colonel Leven Powell from Virginia reported to his wife that he 'called at a man's house who I believe is one

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69 *Virginia Gazette, or Norfolk Intelligencer*, 20 September 1775.

70 George Rae to John Rae, 7 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 337.

71 Richard Henry Lee to General George Washington, 22 October 1775, in James Curtis Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 153.

72 *Ibid*.

73 St. George Tucker, 'Carthage Must Be Destroyed', 21 May 1772, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 1, Folder 9. For usage of the line "*delenda est Carthago*" in Britain and America, see Caroline Winterer, 'Model Empire, Lost City: Ancient Carthage and the Science of Politics in Revolutionary America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (January 2010), pp. 19-20.

74 Thomas Jefferson to John Page, 31 October 1775, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, p. 251. This quote disproves the notion that Jefferson stayed away from the classics in the pre-independence period. For this misconception, see Eran Shalev, 'Thomas Jefferson's Classical Silence, 1774-1776: Historical Consciousness and Roman History in the Revolutionary South', in Onuf and Cole, eds., *Classical World*, pp. 219-247.

75 Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, p. 227.

76 Charles Duncan of Prince George County to President and members of Convention, 9 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 3, p. 410.

77 *Ibid*.

of those who can suit himself to any times, and is consequently either Whig or Tory according to the company he is in.'[78] This attempt to strategically pivot between both sides – a common tactic for those less "warm" in their political opinions – infuriated the partisans who prosecuted "tories," like Samuel Harwood. Harwood wrote to the newspaper publisher Alexander Purdie that anyone who 'injure[d] my country's cause' would be 'drag[ged] from their hiding-places, and expose[d] to publick view.'[79] He refused to sanction 'the caprice of a few *luke-warm patriots*…[who] encourage Toryism, by varnishing over circumstances that ought to lead to suspicion.'[80] The only way to make the "lukewarm" into partisans, Harwood made clear, was to expose them to the warmth and violence of true "patriotic" feeling.

Virginia and British Opposition to the "Riflemen"

Such violent opinions frightened many residents in Norfolk and Portsmouth. These neutral and disaffected persons rejected the warmth of the "riflemen's" political opinions. Rather than virtuous "riflemen," they labelled their foes as rustic, violent "shirtmen." Though rarely discussed in depth, that term originated in New England, where it was also used to mock the "riflemen."[81] This mockery turned to fear and loathing in the southeast. Many inhabitants there were concerned that the 'Shirt armys', as one man called the "riflemen," would destroy their towns.[82] 'We hear there are to be 500 Shirtmen down from Williamsburg to burn this and Portsmouth', one person wrote.[83] Facing liberty with Dunmore or death and destruction of property at the hands of the militiamen, some of Norfolk's residents changed their political position from one of neutrality to resistance. 'It is therefore hoped if not more than 500 Shirtmen come down [to Norfolk]', the merchant Robert Gray wrote, 'his Lordship with those under his command & the assistance he can get here will be able to repel the rebels…What assistance I can give Shall not be wanting as I glory in the name of Tory.'[84] In a show of defiance, Gray – like Daniel Leonard, who appropriated the epithet "tory" in the previous

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78 Leven Powell to Sarah Powell, 13 January 1776, 'Correspondence of Revolutionary Leaders: Letters from Colonel Leven Powell to his Wife', in *The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College* (Richmond, 1901), p. 27.

79 Samuel Harwood to Alexander Purdie, 24 May 1776, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 7, p. 256.

80 *Ibid*.

81 Higginbotham, *Military Attitudes*, p. 103. One of the few discussions of "shirtmen" in the historiography can be found in Isaac, 'Dramatising the Ideology of Revolution', p. 381.

82 Andrew Miller to William Miller, 17 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 428.

83 Robert Gray to John McIndoe, 6 November 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 328.

84 *Ibid*.

chapter – had turned the vice of "toryism" into a virtue that signified his "patriotic" support for British liberty and order. His support for British "patriotism" was also encapsulated in his comment "I glory." This statement was a favourite of George III. In an effort to distance himself from his Hanoverian roots, the new king had made a similar statement. 'Born and educated in this country', he declared at his first opening of Parliament, 'I glory in the name of Briton.'[85] It is difficult to know if Gray had heard this address. But, by tying "tory" and "patriotism" together, this merchant rebuked the partisans who wanted all Virginians to conform to their vocabulary of identification.

There were many colonial elites, even avowed partisans, who shared Gray's disaffection with "riflemen" and saw them, like the Independent Companies, as another instrument of mob rule. The majority of ordinary Virginians favoured these Independent Companies, units which elected their own officers and became a hotbed for new ideas about economic equality and increased manhood suffrage.[86] These notions threatened the landed gentry's oligarchical rule, which depended on the common folk's deference to their supposed betters. To defuse these egalitarian notions and establish more "dependable" units for guarding the colony against a British invasion, the Committee of Safety created the minutemen service. George Mason, a politician in Fairfax County, wrote to George Washington on 14 October 1775: 'The Minute-Plan…will in a short time furnish 8,000 good Troops, ready for Action, & composed of men in whose Hands the Sword may be safely trusted'.[87] It was clear to many common folk, however, that, behind the curtain of military expediency, elites wanted to rid themselves of the Independent Companies. The minutemen service also required that farmers leave their crops to undertake military training. This requirement turned smallholders away from the minutemen service in droves.[88] According to the physician George Gilmer, it was 'a heavy duty'.[89] Abigail Adams explained the elites' logic for defusing the "riflemen's" radicalism. Her husband, the congressman John Adams, had argued that the "riflemen" were 'Men of Property and Family'.[90] She begged to differ. 'I hope their [Virginia's] riflemen, who have shown themselves very savage and even blood-thirsty', she wrote in March 1776, 'are not a specimen of the generality of the people. I am willing to allow the colony great merit for

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85 John Wilkes, *The North Briton from No I. to No. XLVI. inclusive. with Several useful and explanatory Notes* (London, 1769), p. lxx.
86 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 94-95.
87 George Mason to George Washington, 14 October 1775, in Robert A. Rutland, ed., *The Papers of George Mason*, vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 255-256.
88 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 109.
89 Address of George Gilmer to the Inhabitants of Albemarle, 1775, in Brock, ed., *Collections*, vol. 2, p. 122.
90 John Adams to James Warren, 6 July 1775, in Taylor et al, eds., *John Adams*, vol. 3, p. 63.

having produced a Washington – but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore.'[91] For some colonial elites, the "riflemen" evoked a resistance movement that had grown increasingly out of hand.

The British military had similar views to Abigail Adams on the "riflemen." Britain's opinions began as mockery. On hearing about the Hampton incident, a British officer assailed the 'American HEROES' as 'mere Poltroons' and persons without the 'C[h]aracter of an Englishman'.[92] These 'wretches', he argued, would 'take every opportunity, of attacking you by surprise'.[93] Far from "stout fellows," as the colonial newspapers had the inhabitants believe, this officer declared that the "riflemen" were effeminate cowards. The intelligence reports on the Continental Army were no less damning. One report in November 1775 argued that 'Of all the useless sets of men that ever incumbered an Army surely these boasted *Rifle-men* are certainly the most so'.[94] Instead of 'being the best marksmen in the World', the document continued, '[…] there is scarcely a Regiment in camp but can produce men that can beat them at shooting.'[95] The British were soon proved right. On 15 November 1775, Britain's fourteenth regiment killed or captured twenty-five militia troops at the Battle of Kemp's Landing in Virginia. To make matters worse, the prisoners-of-war from the Battle included the militia's commanding officer, Colonel Joseph Hutchings, who was captured by his former bondsman.[96] After repeated engagements with the "riflemen," however, Britain's mockery soon turned to animosity. The British detested the "riflemen" for their way of war. On hearing about the murder of one officer's child, Ambrose Serle, the former Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared that even 'A [Ottoman] Turk would detest so dirty an action' as those committed by the 'cowardly Riflemen'.[97] 'This is not War', he continued, 'supposing their Cause good, but Murder; and, upon a defenceless innocent Child, a most cruel, dastardly & infamous Murder.'[98] In changing the name of "war" into "murder," the British government and their supporters made clear that the "riflemen," who hid behind walls and coerced their enemies into submission, were the complete opposite of virtuous "patriots."

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91 Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776, in Margaret A. Hohan and C. James Taylor, eds. *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 109.

92 Captain Beesley Edgar Joel to Joseph Wright, 25 October 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 278.

93 *Ibid*.

94 Miscellaneous Observations upon the State of the Rebel Army, 4 November 1775, in George Germain Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 3.

95 *Ibid*.

96 Selby, *Revolution*, p. 64.

97 Ambrose Serle: Journal, 22 August 1776, in John Rhodehamel, ed., *The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence* (New York: Library of America, 2001), p. 193.

98 *Ibid*.

Friend of Government

The Meaning of "Friend"

The coercive violence of the "riflemen" led some south-eastern Virginians to form new associations of friendship. Historians often call Dunmore's supporters "loyalists." Yet the widespread usage of "friends of government," seen in Figure 17, reveals the nature of armed disaffection during the conflict: it was a coalition of convenience.[99] Being a "friend of government" was a way to attain one's rights from the British government and monarch as a subject in return for loyalty.[100] Friendship was simultaneously a source of strength and weakness. In a theme common throughout the war, Dunmore and other British officials were able to bring numerous "friends" together into a powerful force, but this coalition collapsed without their ongoing support. After all, friendship was a reciprocal relationship where "friends" – whatever their class, race, or gender – served each other (often as political patrons), but duly expected favours and services in return.[101] In that vein, Norfolk's inhabitants petitioned Dunmore for assistance and called on him to raise his standard in the southeast. 'Yesterday a Town Hall assembled', one worried resident remembered, 'and agree'd [sic] to Petition His Lordship to land Himself and Forces for Their Protection which He has agreed to. the reason of this Step being taken is owing to a Body of Provincials Command'd by P[atrick]. Henry threatening to come down…and destroy this Town & Portsmouth.'[102] The merchant John Randolph also hoped that Dunmore would 'fix up the Royal Standard to distinguish the Friends of Government from its Foes'.[103] Dunmore's establishment of the Queen's Own Loyal Virginians, reportedly numbering around six hundred men, was an unwelcome sight to the Virginia Committee.[104] Washington knew that British subjecthood remained a powerful draw

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[99] This thesis takes a middle ground between historians blaming the British for their failures in recruitment and those who argue that "loyalist" strength was a myth. The strength (and weakness) of the disaffected, this study argues, was based on the British presence and their often-improvised military strategy. For Britain's failures of recruitment, see Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964); and Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King: Loyalists, Indians, and Slaves in the Revolutionary South, 1775-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008). For the disaffected's weaknesses, see O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*.

[100] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, p. 129.

[101] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 218.

[102] Charles Neilson to James Gregorie, 6 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 329

[103] Deposition of John Randolph in Regard to the Removal of the Powder, in 'Virginia Legislative Papers (Continued)', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 15, no. 2 (October 1907), p. 150.

[104] Hugh Edward Egerton, ed., *The Royal Commission on the Losses and Services of American Loyalists 1783-1785: Being the Notes of Mr. Daniel Parker Coke, M.P. One of the Commissioners during that Period* (Oxford:

for colonists born into a royalist political culture.[105] 'If Virginians are wise', George Washington argued, '[…] Lord Dunmore, should be instantly crushed…otherwise, like a snow ball…his army will get size, some through fear, some through promises, and some from inclination, joining his standard.'[106] Rather than forcing people to conform, Jefferson and Lee's misrepresentations of Norfolk and Portsmouth had helped to create the very "nest" they had hoped to destroy.

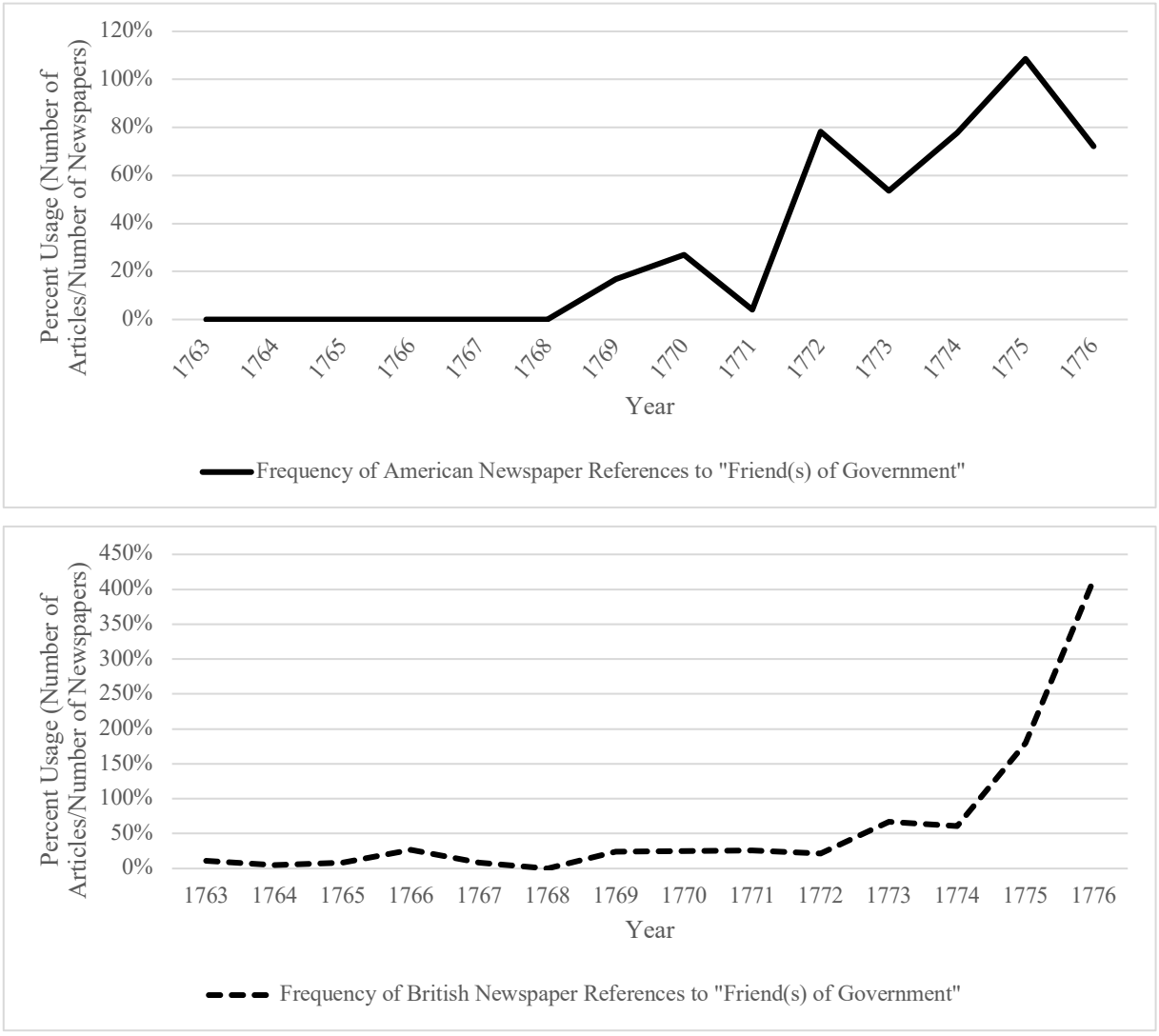

Figure 17: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Friend(s) of Government," 1763-1776.

Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 71. The Queen's Own Loyal Virginians unit was named after Princess Charlotte, the wife of George III.

[105] McConville, *King's Three Faces*, p. 306.

[106] George Washington to Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Reed, 15 December 1775, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: War Series*, vol. 2, p. 553.

The mercantile class of Norfolk and Portsmouth often joined the "friends of government" to reclaim control over their lives. Like the partisans, common material interests were as important as ideology in driving group identification. These interests took on greater importance because Virginia's commerce had 'came to an end'.[107] And, away from the counting tables and warehouses that lined Norfolk's harbour, most of the Norfolk County's residents were not rich. The sandy soils that made up the landscape supported mostly subsistence farming.[108] According to Adele Hast, eighty per cent of Norfolk County's inhabitants had under three hundred acres, and more than half possessed fewer than two hundred acres.[109] With the economy in strife and their properties threatened, some claimed to have joined Dunmore out of interest. In a memorial made after the war's conclusion, Chretia and Ralph Weeks, both smallholder farmers, said they joined because of the dire economic and political circumstances besetting the colony. In Chretia's words, 'her husband and son lived entirely on the produce of Their own state'.[110] Without money, they would be destitute. Dunmore provided a solution. Weeks confessed that the 'Proclamation…was Declared signifying that the losses of all those who joins the British army should be made good'.[111] Material incentives also enticed the Scottish merchants. Anthony Warwick contacted his business partners in October 1775 hoping for 'Law & good Government to take place soon'.[112] He believed that 'if this Country remains long in this distracted Situation' the company's goods would be worth 'one half' of their value.[113] Robert Nelson from North Carolina was even more downbeat about the circumstances. 'Most of the Young Men from Britain, are gone Home for Want of Employment, & the Troublesomeness of the Times', he lamented one week later to a Virginian friend. Without traders for their tobacco, however, Nelson expected that the 'planters will [be] beg[g]ing' for a return to normality.[114] These merchants were motivated by the same desire for personal independence as the planter class, whose search for security has been the focus of historical studies.[115]

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[107] Robert Polk Thompson, 'The Merchant in Virginia, 1700-1775' (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1955), p. 365.
[108] Hast, *Loyalism*, p. 10.
[109] *Ibid*.
[110] Memorial of Chretia Weeks, in American Loyalist Claims, Series II (NA, London), Audit Office Series 13, Volume 107, f. 271.
[111] *Ibid*.
[112] Anthony Warwick to Cumming, MacKenzie, & Co., 18 October 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 235.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] Robert Nelson to Thomas Nelson, 26 October 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 284.
[115] Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, p. 88.

Similar to these white persons, enslaved Virginians also allied with the "friends of government" to secure their liberty. It is difficult to know if persons of colour used the term "friends." But, as can be seen in enslaved petitions for freedom, black Virginians knew that advantageously conforming as the 'King's Subjects' might allow them to attain rights from a distant monarch.[116] Actions spoke just as loudly as words. These rumours of emancipation through service to the monarch quickly spread to Virginia. (It was well known that enslaved people had their own informal networks that spread information throughout the thirteen colonies.)[117] Soon between eight hundred and fifteen hundred men, women, and children flocked to Dunmore for their freedom, which the former governor had guaranteed in his proclamation of November 1775. Some came by boat; some trekked over miles of rough ground; and some even swam to the British ships that raided the tobacco plantations in the Chesapeake.[118] An enslaved person named "Charles" ran away with a white servant. The slaveholder defended his treatment of Charles, arguing his elopement came 'from no Cause or Complaint, or Dread of a Whipping…but from a determined Resolution to get Liberty, as he conceived, by flying to Lord Dunmore.'[119] Another one of Dunmore's black soldiers, George Mills, also defined the meaning of "liberty," a right someone should earn at birth, as service to the British cause. For these enslaved Virginians, freedom often wore a red coat. Numerous enslaved black inhabitants of Norfolk joined with Dunmore because they thought that freedom would be their reward. When the war was over, Mills reported that Captain Avery of Portsmouth had held him in bondage and that he had 'gained his Liberty by the Rebellion…& came to Lord DUNMORE'.[120] These runaways to Dunmore, particularly those who helped him raid plantations in the Chesapeake, actively encouraged the former governor to start an Ethiopian Regiment.[121] Emboldened by these new recruits, Dunmore declared that it was easier to enlist men for that Regiment than for the Queen's Own Loyal Virginians.[122]

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[116] '"Felix" Slave Petition for Freedom', 25 May 1774, in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States: From Colonial Times Through the Civil War*, vol. 1 (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1990 [1951]), p. 6.

[117] 24 September 1775, in L. H. Butterfield, ed., *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 182-183.

[118] Cassandra Pybus, 'Jefferson's Faulty Math: The Question of Slave Defections in the American Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (April 2005), p. 258.

[119] *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 18 November 1775, in Lathan A. Windley, ed., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, vol. 1 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 173.

[120] Decision on Claim, American Loyalist Claims (NA, London), A.O. Series 12, Volume 99, ff. 23-24.

[121] Charles W. Carey, Jr., '"These Black Rascals": The Origins of Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment', *Virginia Social Science Journal* 31, (1996), pp. 65-77.

[122] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 67.

Dunmore and the British also attracted friends amongst Indian nations who desired their independence from land-hungry colonists. John Connolly, a landowner in the Upper Ohio country, organised a meeting between himself and the indigenous peoples of that area. However, the plot backfired when Connolly's servant betrayed him to the Virginian authorities.[123] This failure did not stop the British from carrying on Connolly's work. In a show of friendship that had ramifications for the war in the southeast, the British invited the Seneca to a Treaty at Niagara in September 1775. The Seneca were informed about the duplicity of the Virginians. If this Indian nation established the 'Chain of Friendship' with the 'Great King over the Water', the British promised powder and clothing.[124] The British provided trade goods to bring the Seneca into webs of interdependence – webs that, the British hoped, would inspire them to wage war against the colonists.[125] Those native peoples who were predisposed to side with the British accepted these conditions. In 1776 the Mohawk leader Thayendanegea (or Joseph Brant) also used the language of friendship when petitioning George Germain. Brant demanded that Germain attack the 'white people in that country [New England]' who were taking their lands and hunting grounds.[126] 'We now, brother, hope to see these bad children chastised', he remonstrated, 'and that we may be enabled to tell the Indians who have always been faithful and ready to assist the king what his majesty intends.'[127] Brant acknowledged the British as his 'Brother', as someone who, like a "friend," he promised to assist, but expected favours and concessions in return.[128] He made these entreaties because the Six Nations, 'who always loved the king', were incensed at British inaction.[129] After Dunmore's invasion of the Ohio in 1774, they were 'tired out in making complaints and getting no redress.'[130] Similar to the "friends," Brant knew that establishing networks of friendship with the British brought reciprocal benefits for the Mohawk. The "friends of government" became a loose coalition of individuals, groups, and ethnicities who opposed the partisans' attempts to make their cause the only just one on the continent.

The "friends" in the southeast, whatever their background, cemented their ties of allegiance and virtue through clothing. Although the rich work on Revolutionary fashion has

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[123] David, *Dunmore's New World*, pp. 99-100.
[124] Report of Indian Commissioners from Simon Girty, 20 September 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, pp. 129-130.
[125] Griffin, *American Leviathan*, p. 130.
[126] 'Joseph Brant to George Germain', 1776, *Bartleby*, <http://www.bartleby.com/268/8/2.html>, accessed 23 July 2017.
[127] *Ibid*.
[128] *Ibid*.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] *Ibid*.

not attended to the British-aligned forces use of clothing, the Ethiopian Regiment reportedly wore sashes bearing the inscription 'LIBERTY TO SLAVES'.[131] Helen Maxwell, the Virginian woman mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, remembered that those persons on the 'King's side', as she called it, wore a badge of red cloth on their breasts.[132] After Dunmore's victory at Kemp's Landing, she reported that some of the inhabitants 'wore a flanning [flannel] patch as long as your hand but others were content with a smaller piece.'[133] The colour red denoted the "friends'" support for their British king and country. With people wearing their allegiances on their breasts, the pressure to conform as a "friend" became too much for Maxwell's husband, James. Hiding out in their house in Norfolk, he had tried to remain neutral.[134] But he was eventually seized in the night by a group of British soldiers. On returning from his confinement later that evening, Maxwell's husband had 'a bit of red cloth on the breast of his coat.'[135] Maxwell remembered what happened next: 'Oh! Said I [Maxwell], is it come to this?...Phast! said he [her husband], do you think it has changed my mind! Don't you see how Dunmore is carrying all before him, and if I can save my property by this step, ought I not in common prudence to wear it, for your sake and the children?'[136] Shortly after this incident the family, along with two other friends, left Virginia for the relative safety of North Carolina. Maxwell's recollections may have been riven with post-hoc justifications for her husband's actions, but her experience of being forced to choose sides was not out of the ordinary. With the "shirtmen" on the march, and Dunmore arresting suspected persons, Maxwell reported that the price for flannel patches had skyrocketed.[137]

The Meaning of "Government"

"Friends," as we have seen, was a powerful term, and "government" meant much more than the British government. Government was about comportment, politeness, and gentility. Continuing themes seen in the imperial crisis, the "friends" argued that their anarchic enemies were bankrupt with regards to these three emotional traits. The Portsmouth resident, Katherine

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131 Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for Emancipation in the War for Independence* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 22. For more on enslaved people's clothing, see Shane White and Graham White, 'Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Past & Present* 148 (August 1995), pp. 149-186.
132 My Mother, in James, ed., *Antiquary*, vol. 2, p. 134.
133 *Ibid*.
134 *Ibid*., p. 136.
135 *Ibid*.
136 *Ibid*.
137 *Ibid*., p. 134.

Leslie Hunter, wrote to a friend in Scotland that 'no ordinary woman was as much taken up as I am wt the freins, & Servants of a good King & Government! that I pray God may alwise Reign Supreme! what ever it may Cost a Deluded people to make it so.'[138] She argued that the "shirtmen" were a mad and deluded people who showed none of the refinement expected of participants in government. Hunter had boasted about the 'Balls' that took place with the British officers 'in the Store House where they all Lodge & is call[e]d the Barricks.'[139] Her reference to dancing may not have been accidental. Dancing, Rhys Isaac has shown, was a 'common medium of expression, linking persons at opposite extremes of the social hierarchy' in a performance of refinement.[140] Besides dancing, the partisans' alleged lack of refinement was attacked in other ways. John Conolly, who had joined the British to retain his property of four thousand acres in the Ohio, labelled them as 'enthusiasts': religious and political fanatics who threatened the established order in the colonies.[141] He denounced the 'innovating spirit' of 'enthusiasts' who exhibited 'an over[-]zealous exertion of what is now so ridiculously called patriotic spirit'.[142] These fears of enthusiasm, a feature of political discourse since the crisis, made Norfolk's inhabitants nervous that the fire threats would be carried out. 'The situation of this Town is really precarious', wrote the Gosport merchant Archibald Campbell, 'nothing less is talk[e]d of by the Warm Patriots than destroying it, for fear it should fall into Lord Dunmore's hands'.[143] For many of the "friends," the supposed warmth of the "shirtmen" became another way to identify the supporters of Britain from its enemies.

These politicised notions of comportment and gentility were crucial to disaffected Virginians' understanding of who was on the side of right in this local conflict. If politicians and magistrates were unable to control their emotions, then they were unable to form a stable, legitimate government. Britain's mixed constitution, which was balanced between the House of Commons, the Lords, and kingship, was still seen by many Virginians as the perfect governmental system. In contrast, the rule of partisan committees – the Continental Associations – appeared no better than the state of nature: a world where one's existence was

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[138] Katherine Leslie Hunter to Miss Logan, 5 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 323.
[139] Katherine Leslie Hunter to Katherine Hunter, 29 October 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 304.
[140] Isaac, *Transformation*, p. 85.
[141] John Connolly to John Gibson, 9 August 1775, in Preston Family Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 39.1 P91), Box 1, Folder 3.
[142] *Ibid*.
[143] Archibald Campbell to St. George Tucker, 10 October 1775, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 3, Folder 6.

nasty, brutish, and short.[144] Those sentiments were often repeated in the Norfolk and Portsmouth townsfolk's oaths of allegiance to Dunmore. 'Whereas a Set of factious men', one read on 14 November 1775, 'under the Names of Committees Conventions and Congresses have violently under various pretences usurped the legislative and executive powers of Government and are thereby endeavouring to overturn our happy Constitution and have incurred the Guilt of actual Rebellion against our Gracious Sovereign.'[145] One day later, the "Association of Loyal Virginians" also criticised those bodies – the committees, conventions, and congresses – claiming political power with little justification. 'We the inhabitants', they affirmed, 'being fully sensible of the error and guilt into which this colony hath been misled under colour of seeking a redress of grievances, and that a Set of factious men …have violently and under various pretences usurped the legislative powers of Government'.[146] In a display of British "patriotism," they vowed to 'discharge…our duty to God and the King, and in support of the constitution and laws of our country' in opposition to 'all the horrors of a civil war; and for that purpose we are determined to…defend the passes into our country and neighbourhood to the last drop of our blood.'[147] The Virginian partisans had previously declared their willingness to sacrifice their lives and blood to protect themselves from becoming slaves. The battlelines between the partisans and their enemies had been formed. The "Loyal Virginians" promised to spill their blood in defending their homes against their own countrymen.

The Response to "Friends of Government"

The British newspapers heard the "Loyal Virginians'" entreaties and called for action. The newspapers, as shown in Figure 17, were replete with calls to assist Britain's beleaguered "friends" in Virginia and the other twelve mainland colonies. *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser,* in an article published in January 1776, reported that 'The friends of government are in hopes that Lord Dunmore will be able to maintain the advantages he has gained…his Lordship has wrote to Boston for some troops to assist him, and General Clinton should comply with his request, there are great hopes that he has done more towards establishing the King's Standard [a rallying point for Britain's supporters] in America than all the former meanoeuvres

[144] The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes used these words for the lawless "state of nature" in Richard Tuck, ed., *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 89.
[145] Oath of Allegiance to His Sacred Majesty George III, 14 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 395.
[146] Association of Loyal Virginians on Behalf of His Most Sacred Majesty George III, 15 November 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 403.
[147] *Ibid*., pp. 403-404.

of Government.'[148] Some became frustrated that the government was not doing enough to crush the partisans. Britons feared that the "friends of government," whether in Virginia or New York, would disband if the ministry was unwilling to support the disaffected with arms, military support, and provisions.[149] That same month a writer named "No Yankee," a pseudonym which was itself a repudiation of the partisans' usage of epithets, echoed these entreaties. 'Government has not one moment to lose', he wrote, 'their fleets and armies should be dispatched without the least delay…arriving there [in America] early in spring will encourage the friends of Government, and convince them they are to be no longer neglected; which will soon put a new face upon the whole system of American politics.'[150] These ministerial entreaties mostly fell on deaf ears. Henry Clinton, the new British Commander-in-Chief in North America after the resignation of Thomas Gage, looked instead to South Carolina and Georgia, as 'one third of the inhabitants are enemies to America, & only wait for an opportunity, to plunge a dagger into its vitals'.[151] Furious at this decision, Dunmore deemed the Carolinas 'a most insignificant province' compared to Virginia, which was 'the first Colony on the Continent, both for its Riches and Power'.[152] The "friends" had been abandoned by their own government.

The Virginian partisans were more dismissive than Britain's generals: they gave short shrift to the "friends," their British government supporters, and their arguments. As can be seen in Figure 17, the colonial newspapers, for obvious reasons, had little interest in using the epithet "friends of government" against them. The former colonists had an alternative list of names for their disaffected opponents. They called them 'Tories Pirates Robbers', '*banditti*', and 'notorious *sheep-stealers*'.[153] What did these words have in common? They all involved property crime. These fears of property seizure appeared legitimate after the *Gazette* published an intercepted letter from Norfolk, which detailed a British plot to steal Virginian property. 'It is supposed the forfeited Estates in America will be Sold by Commissioners to the Highest Bidders in order to defray the Expences of Quelling the Rebellion', merchant Archibald Ingram wrote, '[and] if that takes place I intend with many others to become a purchaser & Spend the

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148 *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 18 January 1776.
149 William Tryon to William Howe, 13 December 1775, in Clinton Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Series 1, Volume 12, Item 26.
150 'The Alarm No. III', in *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 25 January 1776.
151 Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, p. 92.
152 Selby, *Revolution*, p. 86.
153 Joseph Ward to John Adams, 14 February 1776, in Taylor and Lint, eds., *John Adams*, vol. 4, p. 24 ('Tories Pirates'); *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 6 October 1775 ('*banditti*'); *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 16 September 1775 ('notorious').

remainder of my Life in retirement'.[154] The truth, according to the partisans, had been revealed: the British and their followers were apparently plotting to seize Virginian's properties. The act of criminalising opponents, like Ingram, was significant for two reasons. First, by defending private property against supposed traitors, the partisans reinforced their authority in the colony – their right to rule at home unchallenged.[155] Second, the decision to criminalise traitors also allowed Virginians to justify acts against fellow inhabitants with whom they had much in common. The Swiss philosopher Emer de Vattel had noted in 1758 that the laws of war dictated a civil war 'ought to be carried on by contending parties in the same manners as by two different nations'.[156] On the subject of criminals, however, Vattel declared that the authorities could 'chuse such laws as may best suit her peculiar circumstances'.[157] In the hands of the partisans, the law of nations was another source of political legitimacy for combatants who saw their cause as a just war and their disaffected enemies as "criminals."

Rebel and Insurgent

The British Declarations of "Rebellion" in the Colonies

With both the "friends" and the "riflemen" signalling their virtue in this civil war, there was a renewed battle over who the true "rebels" actually were. George III inflamed the debate over "rebel," as shown in Figure 18, when he issued his proclamation of "rebellion" on 23 August 1775. This document called upon 'loyal subjects' to resist the 'Authors, Perpetuators, and Abettors of…traitorous Designs.'[158] Two months after the king's proclamation, Dunmore made his own intervention in the continent-wide debate over the epithet "rebel." He ratified a proclamation declaring martial law in Virginia. This document was exceptional for being the

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[154] Archibald Ingram to James Ingram, 30 August 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 58.

[155] 'Government', John Locke argued, 'has no other end but the preservation of property.' (John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 329.) The importance of defence of property to a government's right to rule is explored in Douglas Hay et al eds., *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Allen Lane, 1975); Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1991); and Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-century England* (London, 1989).

[156] Emer de Vattel, *The Law of Nations, Or, Principles of the Law of Nature, Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns, with Three Early Essays on the Origin and Nature of Natural Law and on Luxury*, ed. by Béla Kapossy and Richard Whatmore (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), p. 647.

[157] *Ibid*., p. 82. The malleability of the laws of war and their use to tell stories about enemy combatants can be found in Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2006 [1977]), p. 13.

[158] 'Proclamation of Rebellion', 23 August 1775, *Sources of British History*, <http://www.britannia.com/history/docs/procreb.html>, accessed 1 March 2018.

first emancipation proclamation in American history, but proclamations as a wider genre had a variety of functions that historians need to recognise if they are to understand the implications of Dunmore's actions.[159] Proclamations allowed rulers to give and take away rights; and they were second only to acts of parliament in importance.[160] Dunmore printed his proclamation using John Holt's stolen press. The printing press – a weapon and technology of the "rebellion" that the partisans had used to great effect in propagating the "riflemens'" exploits – was used to demonise its proponents. Utilising the type, ink, and machinery of a "rebel," Dunmore attacked the Committee's claims to just war, and used the fire threats to Norfolk and Portsmouth for his own benefit. The former governor declared that a 'Body of armed Men unlawfully assembled' were on 'their March to attack His Majesty's Troops and destroy the well[-]disposed Subjects of this Colony.'[161] Having robbed the partisans of their legitimacy, he then gave Virginians a choice: join the 'friends of government' or die as traitors. 'I do require every Person capable of bearing Arms', the proclamation read, 'to resort to His Majesty's STANDARD, or be looked upon as Traitors to His Majesty's Crown and Government'.[162] Threatening forfeiture of life and confiscation of land, he then proceeded to free all indentured servants and enslaved Virginians 'appertaining to Rebels'.[163] This line alone sparked widespread panic amongst whites as enslaved men, women, and children joined Dunmore.[164] With his proclamation, the former governor had turned Virginia from a zone of law – where the common law and the normal operation of legal justice was in force – into a zone of war, where unrestricted warfare against "rebels" and the seizure of their property was acceptable.[165]

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[159] Holton, *Forced Founders*, p. 160.
[160] Clarence S. Brigham, ed., *The Royal Proclamations Relating to America 1603-1783* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1911), pp. vii-xii.
[161] Dunmore's Proclamation, 15 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 334.
[162] *Ibid*.
[163] *Ibid*.
[164] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 138-139.
[165] See Eliga H. Gould, 'Zones of War, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772', *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (July 2003), p. 471-510.

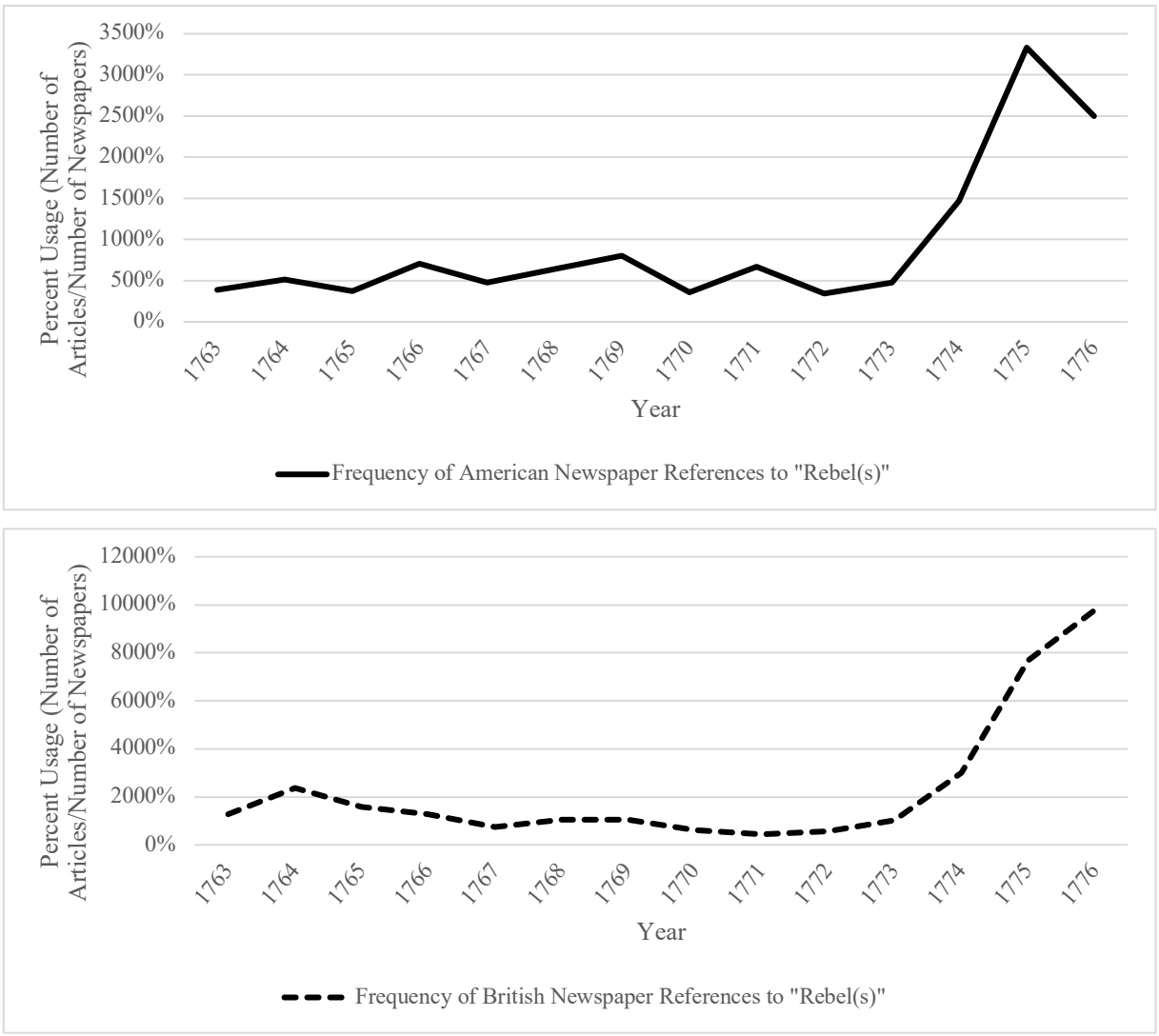

Figure 18: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Rebel(s)," 1763-1776.

Declaring the freedom of enslaved persons and servants was part of a wider attempt to undermine the Virginian elite's mastery over their dependents and, by extension, their claims to political authority. Lauren Duval has shown that mastery was now dependent on allegiances: those who resisted British rule were to be stripped of their rights as subjects.[166] The reason for this shift, if we take the word of one memorial in Henry Clinton's possession, was that the colonists held their property 'in virtue' of their 'political capacity' as British subjects.[167] Without their status as British subjects, the Virginian partisans were aliens in their own land. This attack on mastery was reflected in another passage of Dunmore's proclamation. 'I do further order', it read, that 'all His Majesty's Liege Subjects, to retain their Quitrents, or any

[166] Lauren Duval, 'Mastering Charleston: Property and Patriarchy in British-Occupied Charleston, 1780-82', *William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (October 2018), pp. 589-622.
[167] Memorial, 1775, in Henry Clinton Papers: Chronological Series (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 9.

other Taxes due or that may become due, in their own Custody, till such Time as Peace may be again restored to this at present most unhappy Country'.[168] Whilst the proclamation opened the door to enslaved persons joining the British cause, the document also targeted Virginian elites who had tenants on their land. Most farmers and small planters were tenants, and some of the most prominent families in the Old Dominion – including the Fairfaxes, Lees, and Washingtons – depended on quitrents for their income.[169] (George William Fairfax alone had as many as 230 tenants.)[170] These British efforts to stir up the populace were quite successful. The newspapers were soon rife with tales of tenants and enslaved persons challenging the gentry's authority. By the end of the year, the *Virginia Gazette* reported that when a 'gentlewoman' in Philadelphia reprimanded a black man after he had refused to show deference and move out of her path, the man declared: 'Stay, you d[amne]d white bitch 'till Lord Dunmore and his black regiment come, and then we will see who is to take the wall [give way].'[171] Two white men chased after the black man without success.[172] But, as Gary Nash writes, the readers of the *Gazette* may have been less interested in this individual incident than 'how many such aggressive rebels resided' in their colony.[173]

British officials made sure that the majority of colonists became such "rebels" against partisan authority. Supporters of the British government joined Dunmore in denouncing the partisans and their 'unnatural rebellion'.[174] Officials, including Dunmore, argued that the "rebellion" had been stirred up by the Massachusetts congressman Samuel Adams, the 'great promoter of the troubles', and other members of Congress.[175] It was only a matter of time, they thought, until ordinary people throughout the thirteen colonies would realise that the "rebellion" was against their interests. But, in the meantime, Britons used the term "unnatural" to describe the partisans' actions. The contested nature of that word needs further explication. The Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson wrote in 1767 that the vices of 'affectation,

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[168] Dunmore's Proclamation, 15 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 334.

[169] Willard F. Bliss, 'The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 58, no. 4 (October 1950), p. 427 and 429.

[170] *Ibid*., p. 429.

[171] *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 29 December 1775.

[172] *Ibid*.

[173] Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003 [1988]), p. 45. For the growing usage of "bitch" in the war and how the conflict made women into both victims and survivors, see Sarah M. S. Pearsall, 'Women and the Revolutionary War', in Gray and Kamensky, eds., *Revolution*, p. 273.

[174] J. Monk to George Germain, 17 November 1775, in Germain Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 4.

[175] Henry Clinton to Thomas Carter, 19 August 1775, in Clinton Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Series 1, Volume 10.

forwardness, or any other defect of the temper or character', were the characteristics of an unnatural society.[176] As with the "friends," Ferguson argued that the virtues and vices of the governors directly influenced the virtues and vices of the governed.[177] British generals were equally opposed to the pretentiousness and obstinacy of character in the "rebellious" colonists. The 'unnatural revolt' was proof, declared Thomas Gage, that the 'infatuated multitudes, who have long suffered themselves to be conducted by certain well known Incendiaries and Traitors...against the constitutional authority of the state, have at length proceeded to avowed rebellion'.[178] The "rebels" had no right to resist against the British crown. French intervention on America's behalf was therefore illegal. Some officials were even suspicious that the French had instigated the "rebellion." 'No nation', wrote Henry Ellis, the second royal governor of Georgia, 'profits more from the ignorance & indolence of others than the French.'[179] He worried that, because 'Rebell vessels & agents were received & protected in France', that the French were determined 'to excite & foment the Rebellion in America & incontestably fix a series of prior aggressions on their side.'[180] Similar to colonial fears of ministerial corruption, rumours of an unnatural "rebellion" shaped how Britons perceived the conflict and their enemies.

To make matters worse for the partisans, the term "rebel" had legal implications. Those persons labelled as "rebels" were often declared to be "pirates," a person defined at this time as an "enemy of mankind."[181] The aims of these marauders – who, far from being considered as enemy combatants, were thought of as criminals – were defined in prominent legal treatises. Vattel declared that "pirates" 'may be exterminated whenever they are seized; for they attack and injure all nations by trampling underfoot the foundations of their common safety.'[182] Of course, such inflammatory sentiments ensured that both sides used the epithet "pirate" to delegitimise their foes. Mathew Squire, one of Dunmore's henchmen, was labelled a "pirate" because of his raids on Virginian plantations throughout the Chesapeake (including George Washington's property).[183] Squire and Dunmore's "piratical" acts were even encapsulated in a

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[176] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (London, 1782 [1767]), p. 15.
[177] *Ibid*., pp. 313-314.
[178] Proclamation by Thomas Gage, 12 June 1775, in Clinton Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Series 1, Volume 10, Item 3.
[179] Henry Ellis to William Knox, in Knox Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Item 26.
[180] *Ibid*.
[181] Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), p. 16.
[182] Vattel, *Law of Nations*, p. 228.
[183] William Roscow Wilson Curle to the Committee of Safety, 3 December 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 5, p. 46.

map of the southeast showing *Ld. Dunmore's Depredations in That Colony*, later published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in April 1776.[184] Dunmore may have even recognised that his proclamation of "rebellion" would lead to the partisans being labelled as "pirates." The claim of piracy had inflections beyond mere banditry. It meant that a nation fighting against "rebellious" or "piratical" subjects had the indisputable right to block trade with other independent states.[185] The British official Alexander Wedderburn argued in 1775 that it was 'not merely just but expedient to prohibit commerce…by declaring a province in rebellion [Britain] declares that [the] Law has no force there [in America], that It cannot protect ye. rights of nations, that such province is in the condition of Pirates.'[186] Legally deeming the thirteen colonies 'in the condition of Pirates' framed Britain's approach to three problems: the political nature of the thirteen colonies (technically a "pirate nest"); the involvement of other European nations in the conflict (forbidden by international law); and the later claims of the British mainland colonies to independence (technically legally worthless). Rather than members of a "Common Cause," a legitimate fighting force, many Britons argued that the "Americans" were "pirates" who needed to be brought back into line.

The Conflict over "Rebel" Intensifies

These British officials had many colonial supporters in their claims of "rebellion." The English-born minister, Jonathan Boucher, argued that the partisans had launched a "rebellion" in the religious sphere. George III may have called the conflict a "Presbyterian rebellion," but Boucher, who preached in Annapolis, Maryland, saw what this struggle meant in his own parish.[187] As we saw in the first chapter, Boucher had not endeared himself to Marylanders. He regularly compared the war to the Biblical contest between King David of Israel and his rebellious son Absalom.[188] He also continued to describe the conflict as a war against the 'Church in Maryland'.[189] In a May 1775 letter to his friend William Smith, he argued that the Church of England in the colonies had received its 'Death's Blow – and, without a total Revolution in American Politics, I dare not rely we shall have anything like an Establishment

[184] Parkinson, *Common Cause*, p. 174.
[185] Gould, 'Zones', p. 487.
[186] Notes on the Outbreak of Rebellion, 1775, in Alexander Wedderburn Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Box 2, Folder 6.
[187] Richard Gardiner, 'The Presbyterian Rebellion' (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2005).
[188] Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution; in Thirteen Discourses, Preached in North America between the Years 1763 and 1775* (London, 1797), pp. 294-295.
[189] Jonathan Boucher to William Smith, 4 May 1775, in Henry Addison Papers, 1776-1784 (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 1, Item 13.

in Seven Years more.'[190] The 'American Patriots', he continued, had set the 'whole World around You…in flames'.[191] Five months later (and echoing the criticisms of Norfolk residents about the "warm patriots"), he wrote to another friend about his expulsion from ecclesiastical office by a 'Band of furious Dissenters'.[192] On trying to enter his church, Boucher was met by a crowd of one hundred townsfolk who threatened him with death if he tried to mount his pulpit. He only escaped after laying 'Hold of one of their Head-men, a vile Scoundrel, & swore…that if every Violence & Indignity to my Person was not instantly forsworne, I would that moment blow his Brains out.'[193] Following this violent incident, Boucher returned to England.

Still, persecutions of the disaffected were not unique to Maryland. Under pressure from what Rhys Isaac calls a Baptist 'insurgent culture', the Reverend John Agnew of Suffolk Parish received similar treatment to Boucher.[194] Agnew had reportedly declared that the 'designs of the great men were to ruin the poor people; and that, after a while, they would forsake them, and lay the whole blame on their shoulders, and by this means make them slaves.'[195] As a result of these comments, a group of disgruntled Virginians nailed up his church and forced him to seek safety behind British lines.[196] These incidents do not reflect the fate or opinions of all Church of England ministers. Wallace Brown argues that there was by no means a solid Anglican backbone to disaffection in Virginia.[197] There is a point to be made here, though, that one's meritorious support for the cause mattered – even for those persons in the highest political and religious offices in the Old Dominion.

The homegrown opposition to the partisans' authority was not limited to disaffected persons, like Boucher or Agnew. The rising inequality sweeping the Chesapeake gave many smallholder and landless Virginians the impression that the conflict with Britain was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight.[198] High land prices in Virginia had caused a precipitous fall in its voting population. The property for voting requirements in the Old Dominion were defined in law as one hundred acres of freehold land, or twenty-five acres with a house and

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[190] *Ibid*.
[191] *Ibid*.
[192] Jonathan Boucher to John James, 31 October 1775, in Boucher Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, Mss 93 B66), Box 1, Folder 5.
[193] *Ibid*.
[194] Isaac, *Transformation*, p. 168.
[195] *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 1 April 1775.
[196] Otto Lohrenz, 'Impassioned Virginia Loyalist and New Brunswick Pioneer: The Reverend John Agnew', *Anglican and Episcopal History* 76, no. 1 (March 2007), p. 40.
[197] *Wallace Brown, The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), p. 181.
[198] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 25-26; Bliss, 'Rise of Tenancy', p. 429.

plantation residing upon it.[199] If a person had no property, they could not vote. In Accomack County alone landowning fell from thirty-eight to thirty-three per cent, and the electorate consequently fell from sixty-eight to fifty-one per cent of white males.[200] A declining voter base undermined the legitimacy of the Virginia leadership, as ordinary people felt excluded from the political process. The common folk's protests against this state of affairs continued throughout the war. In July 1775 the Committee exempted overseers with four or more slaves.[201] This act convinced some yeomen farmers that the planter class was attempting to dodge its military duties. 'Some declare the Gentlemen have more at stake and ought to fight to protect it', the physician George Gilmer argued, 'but that none enter the service but as officers.'[202] In effect, ordinary Virginians were questioning the "patriotism" of the politicians elected to represent them. This exemption was abandoned a year later, but the damage was done. Following this protest, a group of tenant farmers in Loudon County rose up against the high land rents demanded of them.[203] Their leader was James Cleveland, a tenant on George Washington's land. Cleveland saw 'no inducement for a poor man to Fight, for he has nothing to defend.'[204] To make matters worse, less than a year after Cleveland's protest, the Virginia leadership faced another rent strike on the outskirts of Williamsburg. The merchant George Rae reported that 1300 to 1400 tenant farmers protested against paying rent whilst being required to fight in a war that had been started by the landowners in Congress and the Virginia Committee.[205]

The Partisans Respond to "Rebel"

Under pressure to respond, elite Virginian politicians attempted to justify their right to rule unchallenged. The Committee and its supporters were not about to be denounced as "pirates," and their glorious cause dismissed as mere "rebellion." Much of the increase in the colonial usage of "rebel," as seen in Figure 18, consisted of attacks on the British use of that term or

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[199] 'An Act to declare who shall have a right to vote in the Election of Burgesses to serve in the General Assembly, for Counties', August 1736, in Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 4, p. 16.
[200] John Gilman Kolp, *Gentleman and Freeholders: Electoral Politics in Colonial Virginia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 44-49.
[201] Alan Kulikoff, 'The American Revolution, Capitalism, and the Formation of the Yeomen Classes', in Young, ed., *Beyond the American Revolution*, p. 81.
[202] Address to the Inhabitants of Albermarle, 1775, in Brock, ed., *Collections*, vol. 2, p. 123.
[203] Thomas J. Humphrey, 'Conflicting Independence: Land Tenancy and the American Revolution', *Journal of the Early Republic* 28, no. 2 (Summer, 2008), p. 166.
[204] *Ibid*., pp. 166-167.
[205] George Rae to John Rae, 7 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, pp. 337-338 ("thirteen to fourteen"); McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 244-245 ("paying rent").

writers appropriating "rebel" as a badge of honour. The Congress had already issued its Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms on 6 July 1775.[206] But in order to prosecute their case, the Virginians turned to John Locke's ideas of rightful resistance in his 1689 pamphlet *Two Treatises of Government*.[207] Locke had argued that if the elected legislature betrayed their trust by disregarding the social contract then they were the real "rebels."[208] Virginians used that logic to attack Dunmore's proclamation. 'Had we immediately taken up arms to assert our rights', one writer argued in November 1775, '[…] We might then, with some shadow of justice, have been charged with rebellion, or a disposition to rebel.'[209] 'But', he remarked, 'this was not the way we behaved: We petitioned once and again…we hoped that the righteousness of our case would appear, that our complaints would be heard and attended to; we wished to avoid the horrors of a civil war.'[210] One anonymous gentleman in Williamsburg made the argument against the colonists being labelled "rebels" more explicit. 'Let no man be dismayed at being proclaimed a Rebel', he declared, '[…] Whoever considers well the meaning of the word Rebel, will discover that the author of the Proclamation is now himself in actual rebellion, having armed our slaves against us, and having excited them to an insurrection'.[211] Kings and governors, he noted, had lost their heads for less grievous acts than the ones committed by Dunmore.[212] Furthermore, the partisans, he argued, were the true "whigs" – the defenders of the British constitution – against the 'present Ministry' who were 'rebels and traitors to their Prince; they are endeavouring to make him forfeit his crown. The Earl of *Dunmore*…may be called a genuine rebel.'[213] To the partisans, the British and their supporters were the true "rebels" to their king.

In order to reinforce the idea that the British were "rebels," the Williamsburg writer also declared that Dunmore had not just broken the king's laws – he was a "rebel" against the 'laws of God'.[214] Two of the most cited Biblical chapters in this period were the thoughts of

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[206] 'A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia, Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms', 6 July 1775, *Avalon*, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/arms.asp>, accessed 18 February 2020.

[207] Donald S. Lutz, 'The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought', *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 1 (March 1984), p. 192.

[208] Locke, *Two Treatises*, ed. by Laslett, p. 415.

[209] A Few Anonymous Remarks on Lord Dunmore's Proclamation, 23 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 460.

[210] *Ibid*.

[211] Anonymous letter, 30 November 1775, in Force, ed., *American Archives*, vol. 3, p. 1387.

[212] *Ibid*.

[213] *Ibid*., p. 1388.

[214] *Ibid*. For more on preachers using the Bible and providence to justify the partisan movement, see Mark Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Spencer W. McBride, *Pulpit and Nation: Clergymen and the Politics of Revolutionary America* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia

the apostles Peter and Paul on obedience to civil rulers.[215] 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers', read Romans 13:1, 'For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.'[216] There was much debate over what being "subject" to a higher power meant, though. Boucher and likeminded parishioners claimed that the Apostles were the defenders of perpetual subjecthood – a notion, based on the divine right of kings, which emerged in opposition the resistance theory outlined by Locke.[217] They argued that, based on Peter and Paul's passage, George III had a right to wage war on "rebels." The partisans had a different view altogether. Their sermons refuted the idea that kings had the ability to attack their own subjects.[218] In a July 1775 sermon before a group of Pennsylvania "riflemen," the parishioner Daniel Batwell argued that 'My master's kingdom is not of this world, nor am I appointed a Ruler, a Judge, or a Divider'.[219] If the Congress, he continued, prosecutes a cause for the 'common good' then 'we have a good cause, and may expect the blessing of Heaven upon our endeavours.'[220] Another writer attacked the supremacy of the king from a different direction. He argued that the king's war was inconsistent with the 'benevolent religion of Jesus Christ'.[221] It was such treatment that had 'proved that the Americans (whom in this view I can no longer call Britons)' had a right to resistance.[222] Moreover, God – not the king – was 'the only lawgiver, that can save and condemn, to whom [we] all owe obedience, and whose laws none can transgress with impunity.'[223] 'The gospel is called a law of liberty', he declared, 'because it bears a most friendly aspect to the liberty of man'.[224] This approach to political authority completely undermined the concept of the divine rule of monarchs, which stressed that George III received his authority from God. In order to refute the idea that they were "rebels," the partisans used the Bible to argue that their cause was consistent with God's word and laws – laws that made kings and the rules under which they governed.

Press, 2016); and Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

215 Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 170.

216 John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, with Large Practical Observations; Delivered in Several Lectures* (Edinburgh, 1766), p. 504.

217 Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 119. For the divine right of kings, see Glenn Burgess, 'The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered', *English Historical Review* 107, no. 425 (October 1992), pp. 837-861.

218 Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 123.

219 Daniel Batwell, *A Sermon, Preached at York-Town, Before Captain Morgan's and Captain Price's Companies of Rifle-Men, On Thursday, July 20, 1775* (Philadelphia, 1775), p. 16.

220 *Ibid*., pp. 16-17.

221 John J. Zubly, *The Law of Liberty. A Sermon on American Affairs, Preached At the Opening of the Provincial Congress of Georgia* (Philadelphia, 1775), p. viii.

222 *Ibid*.

223 *Ibid*., p. 5.

224 *Ibid*., p. 7.

Besides convincing British and colonial observers that they were not "rebels," the Congress knew that native peoples also had to be courted. Congressmen understood that without the support of the Six Nations, in particular, the British could attack the colonies from both the east and west. On 13 July 1775, Congress tried to show the Haudenosaunee that the thirteen colonies were united in friendship. 'We are sixty-five [congressmen] in number', the address read, 'chosen and appointed by the people throughout all these provinces and colonies, to meet and sit together in one great council, to consult together for the common good of the land, and speak and act for them.'[225] The Congress then justified the war and pleaded with the Six Nations – who comprised the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora peoples – not to intervene. It concluded: 'Brothers! We have said we wish you Indians may continue in peace with one another, and with us the white people… let us fortify our minds and shut our ears against false rumours'.[226] Some members of the Six Nations responded positively to these sentiments, and several of the New England nations even visited Congress.[227] Yet, as many Indian persons eventually realised, the Congress's claims of unity were double-edged. Three months after Congress's address, a group of colonial Indian commissioners tried to intimidate the Mingo, Wyandot, Lenape, and Shawnee nations into submission. 'The thirteen great Colonies of this Extensive Continent, Comprehending in the whole, at least One Million of Fighting Men', the commissioners declared, 'are now so firmly United and Inseparably bound together by one lasting Chain of Freindship, that we are no more to be Considered as Distinct Nations, but as one great and Strong Man, who if Molested in any one of his Members, will not fail to Exert the Combined force of his whole Body to Punish the Offender'.[228] Lewis argued in October 1775 that 'our United Colonies…are as one Man and that Virginia is one of them and as the right Arm so that you must not beleive those who tell you that the Virginians are a Distinct People[.]'[229] Even though native peoples were starting to conflate the terms "Virginian" and "American," these commissioners used these naming strategies to convince various Indian nations that they were not disunited "rebels." The vast spectrum of indigenous responses to these claims, from support for the colonists to neutrality to outright resistance, showed that the partisans' claims had mixed success.

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[225] 'The Continental Congress: Address to the Six Nations', 13 July 1775, in Alden T. Vaughan, *Early American Indian Documents: Revolution and Confederation* (Lanham, MD: University Publishers of America, 2004), p. 15.

[226] *Ibid*.

[227] Irvin, *Clothed in Robes of Sovereignty*, p. 179.

[228] Report of Indian Commissioners on Negotiations, 10 October 1775, in Louise Phelps Kellogg and Reuben Gold Thwaites, eds., *The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), p. 96.

[229] At a Meeting for the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 9 October 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 84.

Once they had cemented their status as rightful soldiers before both the British and indigenous peoples, the partisans redefined who was a "rebel." Despite this term having no uptake in Britain, the Virginian partisans labelled those persons who were disaffected with the committees, conventions, and congresses that ran the United Colonies as "insurgents." Robert Parkinson has recognised the importance of that term, but he has offered no explanation of what that epithet meant or why it rose to prominence.[230] Figure 19 shows a surge in the partisans' usage of "insurgent." That occurred because the partisans feared that disaffected persons and enslaved black persons were forming an alliance of "insurgents." But the partisans' usage of that term was an amalgam of two prior uses. First, both the partisans and the British applied that label to any person who opposed "established" authority. That definition explains the rise in use of "insurgent," shown in Figure 19, in 1764 (when the "Paxton Boys" challenged Philadelphia's government), in 1772 (when the "regulators" of North Carolina tried to reform local government), and in 1775 (when those persons disaffected with partisan rule rose up in the Carolinas and Virginia against their enemies). The Virginian doctor Robert Honyman commented on the latter uprising of disaffected "insurgents." 'We have had late accounts that the malcontents as they are termed; that is the friends of Government', he wrote in his diary in February 1776, 'had risen in arms in South Carolina…& an engagement ensued; in which the insurgents sustained great loss.'[231] George Gilmer was in an unforgiving mood when he wrote that even those persons who dodged military enlistments or opposed taxation measures to support the war effort 'must be a Rebell to his country.'[232] The second meaning of "insurgent" was its association with enslaved persons who defied the laws of Virginia's slave society. The moment a well-regulated force was joined with persons of colour was often the moment it was termed a "rebellion."[233] The partisans' association of the disaffected with enslaved persons can be seen in the conflict around the southeast. On 26 November 1775, Colonel William Woodford, who was busy preparing his defences at Great Bridge to the northwest of Norfolk, reported that the 'principle Scotch Tories' in Norfolk 'command Black Companys'.[234] Historians must exercise care, then, when discussing alliances between enslaved and disaffected persons. The word "insurgent" meant a transgressor of white rule as much as it did an opponent of the partisans' political authority in Virginia.

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230 Parkinson, *Common Cause*, p. 199.
231 24 January 1776, Diary of Robert Honyman (microfilm, Library of Virginia, Richmond, 28855), p. 8.
232 Address to the Inhabitants of Albermarle, 1775, in Brock, ed., *Collections*, vol. 2, p. 127.
233 Judith Van Buskirk, *Standing in their Own Light: African American Patriots in the American Revolution* (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2017), p. 46.
234 William Woodford to John Page, 26 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, pp. 495-497.

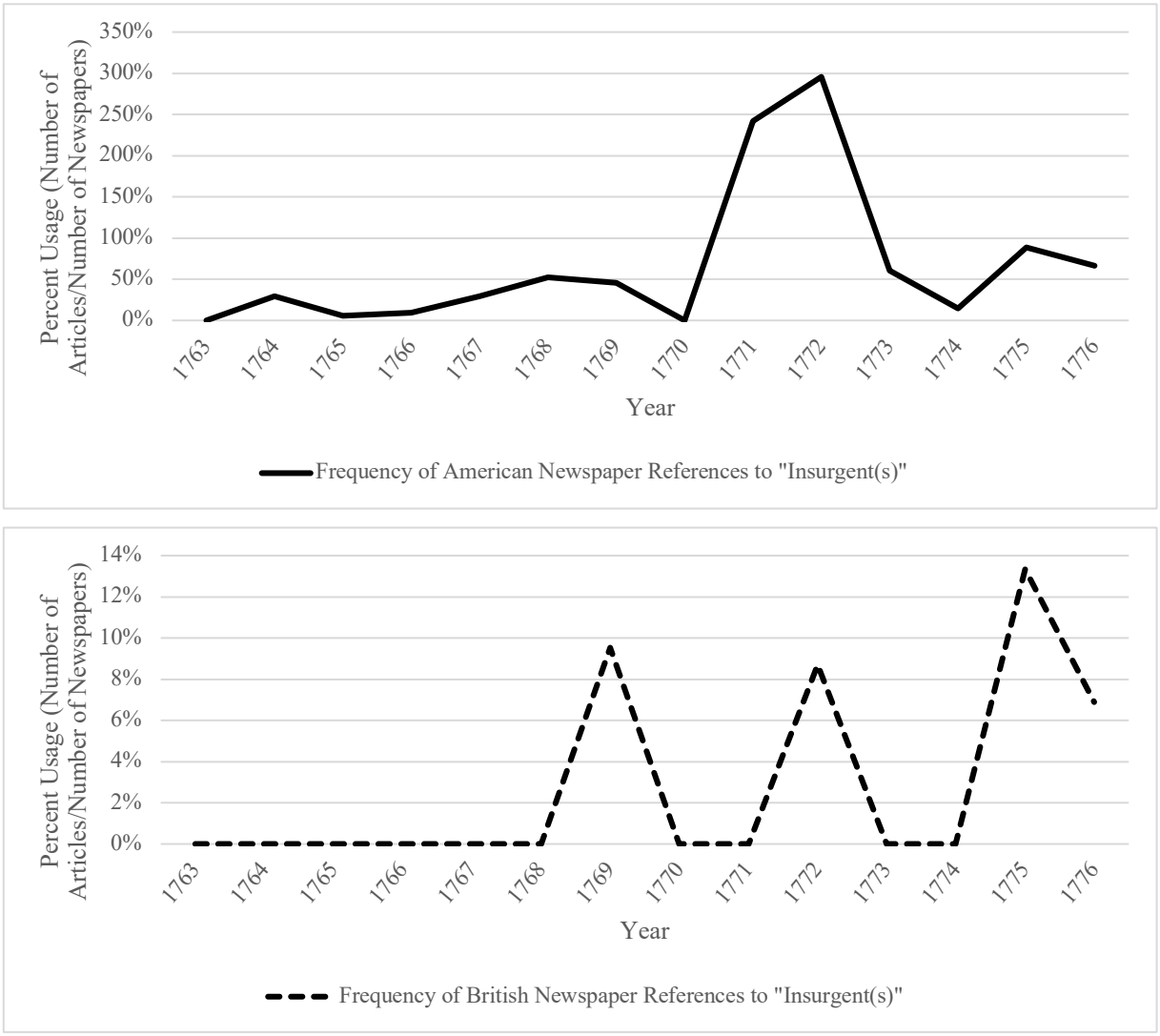

Figure 19: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Insurgent(s)," 1763-1776.

The Conflict Becomes a "Civil War"

Whatever their disagreements over nomenclature, both sides agreed that the conflict between Britain and the thirteen colonies was a "civil war." There has been a great deal of historical attention paid to the question of whether the "American Revolution" was a civil war, but scholars have not focused on when the term "civil war" was popularised.[235] Figure 20 reveals that the surge in the use of "civil war" took place before independence, however different combatants used that phrased for competing ends. Using similar rhetoric to the "unnatural rebels," Edmund Burke argued in his addresses to Parliament throughout autumn 1775 that the

[235] Armitage, *Civil Wars*, pp. 135-137.

conflict against America was a 'lasting and ruinous Civil War' – 'an unnatural Civil War' to depopulate and destroy the colonies.[236] Burke, like many supporters of the partisans, argued that national sovereignty should prevail over the entitlements of Britain's colonies.[237] Yet he also saw – like those partisans who labelled themselves as "British Americans" during the imperial crisis – that Britain and America's prosperity was intertwined. A war against America was also a "civil war" in Britain.[238]

The British government's supporters did not share Burke's sentiments about the nature of this "civil war." The report on the Continental Army, mentioned in the section on "riflemen," denounced the rifle-wielding soldiers and their 'doctrines of *independence* & *levellism* [which] have been so effectually sown throughout the Country, and so universally imbibed by all ranks of men'.[239] The 'doctrines of *independence* & *levellism*' were pointed references to the "levellers" of the English Civil War, who pursued popular sovereignty and economic equality.[240] For British and colonial elites alike, the term "levelling" was synonymous with the disorder that radical political principles would create. 'The fanatical spirit [of religion], let loose [by the civil war]', recounted philosopher David Hume in his *History of England* (1754-61), 'confounded all regard to ease, safety, interest and dissolved every moral and civil obligation.'[241] In a 1776 letter to the Congress, Jonathan Boucher echoed Hume's remarks. He argued that forgetting these historical lessons meant allowing the 'Imposters in Patriotism' to turn 'Nations once as happy and free as ourselves' into wastelands of 'anarchy' and 'civil war'.[242] The 'sacred Name of Liberty', he exclaimed, would become 'a Word of Scorn and Mockery in the Mouths of Tyrants, and their abandoned Minions and Emissaries.'[243] New terms had arisen in the thirteen colonies and Britain. The conflict had started to become known as either the 'American Civil War' or the 'second [English] civil war'.[244] Like some disaffected persons with Bacon's Rebellion, some Britons saw the violence on the continent and compared it to a conflict in a prior century.

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[236] Bristol Petition, 27 September 1775, in Langford, ed., *Burke*, vol. 3, p. 175 ('lasting'); Draft Petition on the Use of Indians, 1775, in *Ibid*., p. 180 ('unnatural').
[237] Richard Bourke, *Empire & Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 370.
[238] *Ibid*., p. 296.
[239] Miscellaneous Observations, 4 November 1775, in Germain Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 3.
[240] *Ibid*.
[241] David Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688*, vol. 5 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983), p. 380.
[242] Boucher, *Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, p. 7.
[243] *Ibid*.
[244] *Newport Mercury*, 24 April 1775 ('American Civil War'); *Remarks on Dr. Price's Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, &c.* (London, 1776), p. 34 ('second').

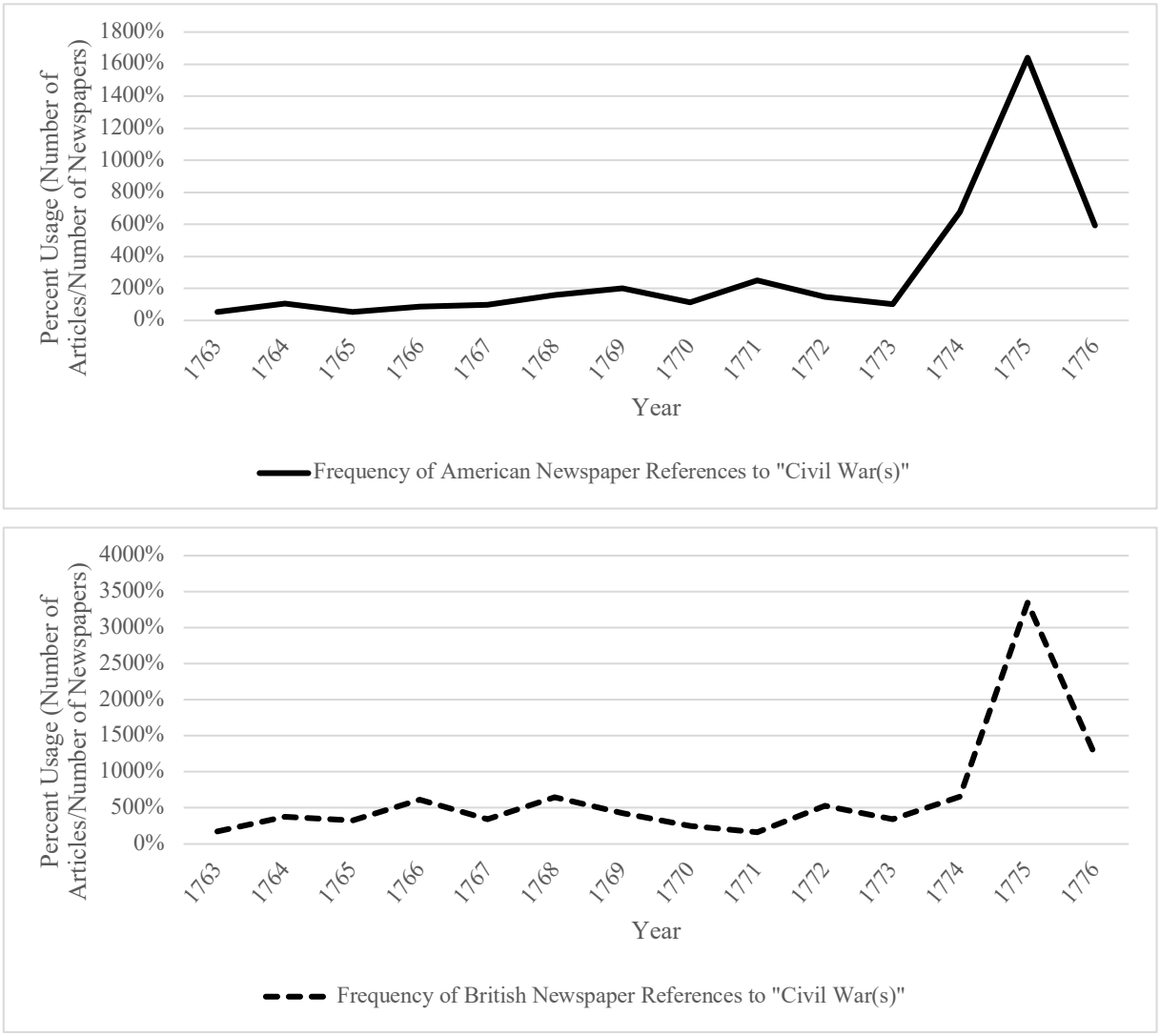

Figure 20: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Civil War(s)," 1763-1776.

This usage of "rebellion" and "civil war" likely rekindled unhappy memories for some Virginians. The colony's Scottish-born inhabitants may have remembered the Jacobite Rebellion in 1745 or heard and read about the event from relatives and historical works. That conflict between the claimant to the British throne Charles Edward Stuart and the ruling House of Hanover had forced the Scots into choosing sides, sometimes in order to defend their property.[245] Stuart's army captured Edinburgh and made it as far as Derby in the midlands before William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland (and George II's own son), ended the uprising. The "Butcher" Cumberland's reprisals on the Highlander population – the executions, deportations, and imprisonment of thousands of innocent and guilty inhabitants alike – lived

[245] Colley, *Britons*, p. 82.

long in Scottish memories.[246] Dunmore's own father was a supporter of Charles Stuart – a fact that the partisans both knew and openly acknowledged – and many compared the current conflict in the southeast to "The Young Pretender's" uprising.[247] 'I am afraid it will be as bad if not worse than the rebel[l]ion in Scotland', worried John Ewing, referring to the impending attack on Norfolk, 'this is the last opportunity I know of till peace is restored in this unhappy Country which God only knows when[.]'[248] John Johnson had a different strategy to remain neutral. The Portsmouth merchant preferred not to speak or act at all. If the *use* of epithets forced Virginians to consider conformity or exclusion, those who wanted to remain neutral in the contest partly defined their neutralism by *not using* epithets. 'Shoud the governor think [he can de]fend Norfolk with the Forces he has got', he wrote to a Scottish friend three days after Dunmore's proclamation, 'I, among others may be obliged to take the field.'[249] Hoping for good news 'respecting these disturbances' from Britain, he stated that 'we do not speak of Rebellion here.'[250] For those Virginians who wanted to remain neutral, silence was a vital part of how they negotiated the conflict.

Even Scots who supported the war against Britain, such as the Richmond merchant Edward Johnson, voiced their opposition to what many saw as the growing violence and political polarisation in Virginia. Born in Scotland, Johnson was the brother-in-law of Colonel William Preston, who became proficient throughout the conflict in persecuting disaffected persons and putting down insurrections in southwest Virginia. Preston even helped Johnson collect debts from persons living in the western counties.[251] On 24 August 1775, Johnson complained to Preston that he 'should live to see a time among Civilised people, when a man[']s Country [of birth] would be imputed to him as a crime'.[252] He made this lament because he had heard that, without opposition from the Committee of Safety's attendees, the 'Scots men [were] abused & suspected…for no other reason but…for having the misfortune to be born in Scotland'.[253] The partisans often treated the Scots as a politically uniform, pro-British people. Worse was to come. In December of that year, Johnson wrote to Preston about

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[246] John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, '"The Graves of the Gallant Highlanders": Memory, Interpretation and Narratives of Culloden', *History and Memory* 19, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2007), pp. 5-38.
[247] David, *Dunmore's New World*, p. 10 ("supporter"); Anonymous letter, 30 November 1775, in Force, ed., *American Archives*, vol. 3, p. 1387 ("openly acknowledged").
[248] John Ewing to Thomas Ewing, 20 November 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 4, p. 437.
[249] John Johnson to James Balantine, 17 November 1775, in *Ibid*., pp. 426-427.
[250] *Ibid*.
[251] Tillson, Jr., *Gentry and Common Folk*, p. 27.
[252] Edward Johnson to William Preston, 24 August 1775, in Preston Family Papers, 1727-1896 (VHS, Richmond, Mss1 P9267 f FA2), Item 893.
[253] *Ibid*.

a business trip to Norfolk. Colonel William Woodford afforded him a pass so he could proceed without inspection in a war zone. On returning, however, the committee noted that a soldier had reported him for saying 'that if I was forced to take arms on [the] American side, the fighting was disagreeable some I would fight, but would embrace the first opp[ortunit]y of deserting to the Governour'.[254] Johnson was aggrieved that the committee had charged him with a 'heinous crime' upon the word of a 'mad man'.[255] He further denounced the 'violent prejudice…prevailing against Scotsmen'.[256] "Prejudice" was a significant charge. The truly civilised person was someone capable of "liberality," a trait associated with generosity, empathy, and tolerance.[257] In effect, Johnson had charged the prejudiced colonists with conduct worthy of an overzealous "rebel."

These charges of treachery flew with such frequency for a reason: the conflict had devolved into an 'internal civil war' within Virginian homes and between family members.[258] With the outbreak of war, families were divided over who was sufficiently loyal to the partisan cause. Judith Bell, separated from her brother by the Atlantic, tried to convince him that the partisans did not merit the title "rebel." 'I hope', she pleaded in her February 1776 letter, 'you are not among the herd that think us all Rebels, and so will not deign to write to any such because we have been oblig[e]d to take up arms in our defence; believe me my D[ea]r brother the king has not better subjects in Britain than the Americans'.[259] Bell then went on to explain why the partisans had reluctantly taken up arms. '[T]ho they will not willingly be made slaves', she wrote, 'they would still be dutiful subjects o how horrid is a civil war how dreadful in its consequences sure there never was a viler wretch then the Earl of Dunmore, no tyrant on Earth could wish for a viler instrument of his cruelty than him.'[260] The fact that Bell believed her own brother did 'not deign to write' because of the 'herd that think us all Rebels' shows her wielding the language of 'family feeling' – the emphasis on claims of 'domestic harmony' in a period of disunity – to shape her brother's behavior and ensure that this Atlantic family, separated by political turmoil, remained friendly and communicative.[261]

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[254] Edward Johnson to William Preston, 16 December 1775, in *Ibid*., Item 908.
[255] *Ibid.*
[256] *Ibid*.
[257] J. M. Opal, 'The Labors of Liberality: Christian Benevolence and National Prejudice in the American Founding', *Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (March 2008), p. 1084.
[258] Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001 [1976]), p. 137. See also Larkin, 'Loyalism', in Gray and Kamensky, eds., *Revolution*, pp. 291-310.
[259] Judith Bell to her brother, 16 February 1776, Photostat Collection (Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg), Volume 131, Item 18.
[260] *Ibid*.
[261] *Ibid*. ('deign'); Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, p. 11 ('family feeling' and 'domestic harmony').

Bell here used two tactics to convince her brother to moderate his comments about the partisans being "rebels." First, she questioned his unwillingness to write. This indication of epistolary indebtedness – that her brother owed her a letter – was a literary trope in this period.[262] She also confronted him with his own lack of empathy and sentiment towards those persons proclaimed as "rebels" in America and required him not to follow those Britons – the "herd" – who had cast the colonists as traitors. These appeals to family, sentiment, and character – a language that inspired familial conformity in political sentiments – were just as powerful as the language of liberty.[263] In a sign of its power, this language of "sensibility," which was defined as a person's ability to respond to complex emotional or aesthetic influences, also underpinned the most hateful epithet that was used and radicalised before independence: "savage."

Savage

Sensibility and the Meaning of "Savage"

With tensions between Britain and the partisans close to a breaking point, members of the different sides in this contest began to call each other "savages." The colonists had used that epithet in Pontiac's war for indigenous persons. But Figure 21 shows that this phrase was also used with increasing frequency before independence was declared. There were two reasons for that shift: the British and their allies continued to attack the "riflemen" for their military tactics, and the partisans started calling their opponents, even disaffected persons, "savages." The partisans did this to frame themselves as the only "civilised" combatants in the war. The radicalisation of this epithet suggests that historians have focused too much on how the colonists have applied the term "savage" to native peoples.[264]

In fact, the term "savage" could be applied to any person deemed worthy of that epithet.[265] The Massachusetts judge Peter Oliver recognised the contested nature of "savage" in his 1781 *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*. In a rather self-serving passage, which justified Britain's employment of indigenous auxiliaries, Oliver attacked

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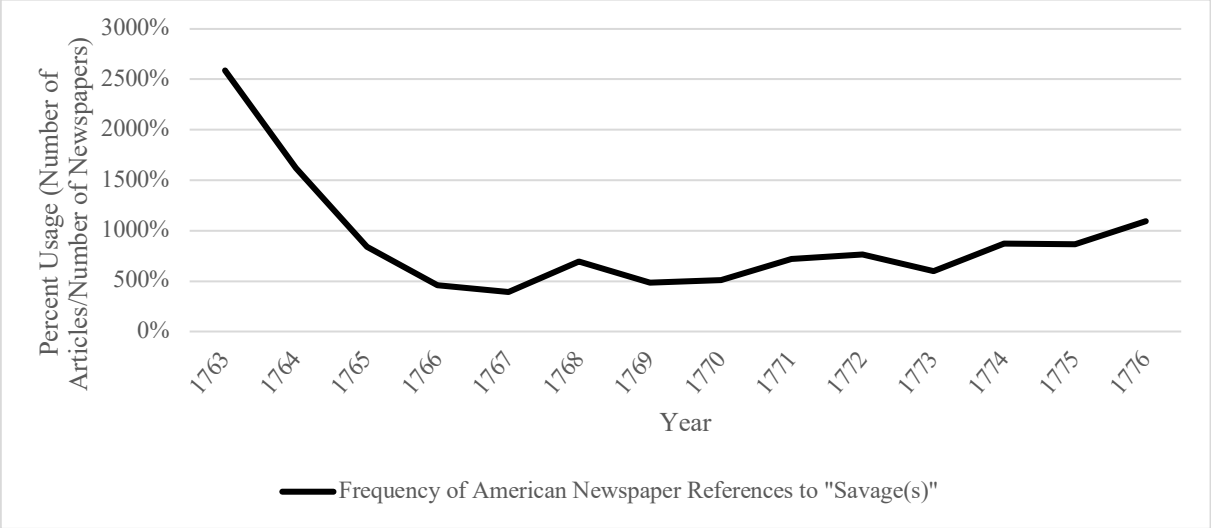
[262] *Ibid*., p. 127.
[263] *Ibid*., p. 17.
[264] Historians who have focused on the term "savage" have tried to discover when the colonists normalised that term for indigenous persons. See Alden T. Vaughan, '"Expulsion of the Salvages": English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622', *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (January 1978), pp. 57-84; Wayne E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500-1865* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 226; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, p. 83; and Parkinson, *Common Cause*, pp. 423-424.
[265] Knott, *Sensibility*, p. 102.

parliamentarians like Edmund Burke who were 'against employing the Indians, to whom they gave the Appellation of*, Savages*.'[266] 'Savages is a convertible term', he countered, which designated 'a Person who acts contrary to the Principles of Humanity: An Englishman who hath been educated in [the] Rules of civil Society, may, by a certain Tenor of Conduct, contract…Savageness of Manners'.[267] One's humanity, Adam Smith argued, was defined by a person's capacity to show empathy. Those who were unable to empathise with other human beings – to understand their feelings and feel their pain – were therefore inhuman.[268] This charge of inhumanity was directed at many persons: Indians were the most common targets of "savagery"; Smith compared slaveholders to hardened criminals; on hearing of the murders in Lancaster, Benjamin Franklin attacked the "Paxton Boys" as 'CHRISTIAN WHITE SAVAGES'; and many enslaved persons were deprecated for their 'savage Cruelty of heart'.[269] One implication of the rise in the usage of "savage" was that Congress and its supporters argued from a position of weakness, not strength. In making their claims of difference with regards to Britain, then, the partisans were constantly on the defensive, both before independence and afterwards, for their "savage" actions.



[266] Douglas Adair and John A. Schutz, eds., *Peter Oliver's Origin & Progress of the American Rebellion: A Tory View* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 132.
[267] *Ibid*.
[268] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, ed. by Haakonssen, p. 11. For the rise of "imagined empathy" in the Enlightenment, see Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).
[269] Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers*, p. 227 ("common"); Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, ed. by Haakonssen, p. 242 ("criminals"); Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of this Province, By persons unknown* (Philadelphia, 1764), p. 27 ('CHRISTIAN'); Journal to Charleston, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 3 Folder 12 ('savage Cruelty').

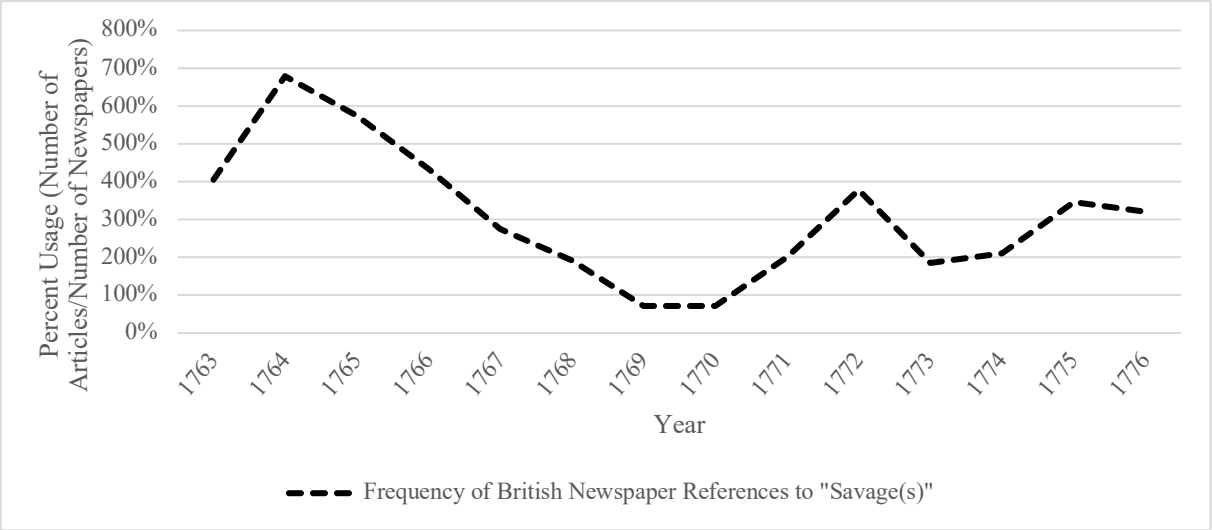


Figure 21: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Savage(s)," 1763-1776.

The Partisans as "Savages"

Even though the Continental Congress was willing to negotiate with the Six Nations, many Ohio Indians were unwilling to forgive the "savage" Virginians. The onset of war only increased tensions between colonists and indigenous peoples. The Shawnee, in particular, were incensed as colonists moved into the Kentucky region following the Treaty of Camp Charlotte. Sami Lakomaki has shown that most of the Shawnee greeted the outbreak of war with concern over what it meant for their land rights.[270] Most native peoples did not think the war between America and Britain in 1775 was "revolutionary." It was rather a continuous battle over the Ohio Valley.[271] Though the Shawnee were divided into those pursuing neutrality and those seeking war, they remonstrated with one official that 'Virginians…were now settling in Great Numbers in the Midst of their Hunting Grounds on the Kentucke River and that many…Crossed the Ohio [and] killed and drove off their Game.'[272] With tensions renewed after Dunmore's war, many Indian peoples responded with new epithets. Increasingly, Ohio Indians associated "Americans" from all colonies with the much-hated Virginians. The continued depredations of the "whites" in Indian country led to a new, more radical, turn of phrase used amongst the Shawnee, Seneca, and some Mohawk: 'white Virginian Savages'.[273]

[270] Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*, p. 102.
[271] *Ibid*.
[272] *Ibid*., p. 109.
[273] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 278 ("Shawnee"); Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant, 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), p. 336 ("Mohawk").

It is difficult to find these statements before America's independence from Britain, but they were replete throughout the war. Towards the end of the conflict, the Seneca leader Sayenqueraghta made perhaps the most eloquent statement against Indian "savagery." He asserted that the Virginians 'gave us great Reason to be revenged on them for their Cruelties to us and our Friends, and if we had the means of publishing to the World the many Acts of Treachery and Cruelty committed by them on our Women and Children, it would appear that the title of Savages wou'd with much greater justice be applied to them than to us.'[274] Indians were unwilling to accept their labelling as "savages" when Virginians had prosecuted destructive and total wars against Indian country for decades.

Supporters of the British government joined the Ohio Indians in attacking the "savage" colonists. Figure 21 shows the sharp upturn in the use of "savage" at the start of the conflict. This increase in usage was partly due to some Britons comparing the colonists to "savages." Throughout the war, the colonists were likened to Indians in no fewer than sixty-five British prints (see, for example, Figure 22).[275] Such comparisons began before the war commenced. In January 1775 the *Public Advertiser*, a supporter of the conflict, attacked the Congress's 'Detestation of every Form…of a monarchical Government' and argued they 'would [rather] prefer the wandering Life of their Neighbour[ing] Savages' to being 'made peaceable Members of any State in Europe'.[276] British soldiers argued that the partisans had also forgotten the English customs of war. The partisans' victories at Lexington and Concord had won the militiamen fame, but their conduct at these engagements had also bought them infamy. The officer James Abercrombie reported that one British soldier 'was Scalped and had his Ears and Nose Cutt off tho' not dead'.[277] These stories quickly made their way back to London. There the widely-read pamphleteer James McPherson condemned the 'BARBAROUS CRUELTY [shown] to the wounded soldiers', who had their 'eyes torn out of their sockets, by the barbarous mode of GOUGING, a word and practice peculiar to the Americans.'[278] The term "barbarians" did not just denote a foreigner. In classical works, the Greeks had argued that they were champions of political freedom as opposed to "barbarians" were its opponents.[279] Some

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[274] General Haldimand to Guy Carleton, 17 February 1783, in Guy Carleton, 1st Baron Dorchester Papers (NA, London), Public Record Office Series 30, Volume 55, Item 62, f. 33.
[275] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, p. 29.
[276] *Public Advertiser*, 5 January 1775.
[277] James Abercrombie to "Sir," 2 May 1775, in *A British Account of the Battle of Lexington* (Boston, 1897), p. 2.
[278] James Macpherson, *The Rights of Great Britain asserted against the Claims of America: being an answer to the Declaration of the General Congress* (London, 1776), p. 59.
[279] Arno Borst, 'Barbarians: The History of a European Catchword', in *idem*., *Medieval Worlds: Barbarians, Heretics and Artists in the Middle Ages*, translated by Eric Hansen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 4-5.

of these Britons wanted to fight these "barbarous" practices in kind. The officer Robert Donkin suggested using biological warfare against the colonists in his 1777 *Military Collections and Remarks*. 'Dip arrows in matter of smallpox, and twang them at the American rebels', he wrote in a passage redacted from all but three copies of the *Remarks*, '[…] This would sooner disband these stubborn, ignorant, enthusiastic savages, than any other compulsive measures.'[280] Even before independence, therefore, many Britons had built up hatred for their opponents, who were often recognised throughout the war as "rebels" and "savages."

Figure 22: The female combatants, or, who shall. This image is one example of how Britain represented the colonists as indigenous persons in their prints. Source: Yale University.

Despite these more hardened attitudes against the colonists, a significant proportion of Britons criticised their nation's "savage" conduct in the war. As Troy Bickham notes, many newspapers remained relatively neutral before independence was declared in the thirteen colonies.[281] At this time, there were still a number of Britons in the press who had misgivings about the conflict. After the battles at Lexington and Concord, the *Public Advertiser* was hardly jubilant about the prospect of war. The issue of 8 June 1775 included the lamentation of one writer that Britain was now at war with the 'Americans', who were 'our Brethren, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh.'[282] In commentary reminiscent of Thomas Jefferson's 1774

[280] Robert Donkin, *Military Collections and Remarks* (New York, 1777), pp. 190-191. See also Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1782* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), p. 132.
[281] Bickham, *Making Headlines*, p. 58.
[282] *Public Advertiser*, 8 June 1775.

Summary Rights, which had lauded the colonists' efforts to subdue and conquer the continent for Great Britain, the newspaper celebrated the fact that the colonists had left 'pleasant Villages, fair Inheritances, dear Friends and Connections in this Land' to tame a 'howling Wilderness surrounded by Savages and Wild Beasts, which being now brought to, and surely cultivated and settled, is beheld with an envious Eye'.[283] Those Britons trying to rehabilitate the partisans also charged the government with employing "savages" in their war against the colonists. Edmund Burke made this critique. He was scathing in his comments about the government, and in 1775 argued that the king's ministers had mobilised 'every Class of savages and Cannibals…to lay Waste with fire hatchet with Murders…the Inhabitants, the most beautiful Works of Skill and Labour by which the creation and name of God was ever glorified by his Creatures.'[284] The juxtaposition of a "savage" wilderness, in the process of being 'reclaimed [by] the spirited Enterprise of our American brethren', and the "civilized" colonists was a popular motif in pro-partisan British sentiment.[285]

The "riflemen's" actions at Norfolk proved Burke wrong about the "civilised" partisans. The actions of the partisans in the southeast showed that they were not the victims that many sympathetic Britons presented them to be. Fearing the advance of Woodford's troops towards Great Bridge, Dunmore ordered a disastrous attack against the partisans' militia fort on 9 December 1775. Woodford relayed to the Committee a day later: 'From the vast effusion of blood on the bridge & in the fort…I conceive their loss to be much greater than I thought…& the victory to be complete.'[286] Following the defeat, the 'Shirt armys' of 1,200 men entered Norfolk unopposed. Woodford had promised not to exact vengeance on its residents.[287] (The Committee had earlier issued a declaration disputing 'divers Reports' the militia 'were empowered and directed to destroy the houses and properties of particular persons' in the area.)[288] But the "shirtmen" had other ideas. After the British ships of war opened fire on the town in an attempt to displace the "riflemen's" positions on the foreshore, the militiamen responded, over three days, by sacking almost ninety per cent of the town. The fears of disaffected persons that Norfolk would be destroyed had finally come to fruition. The militia torched the town whilst shouting 'Keep up the Jigg' and 'damn them, we'el burn them all.'[289]

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[283] *Ibid*.
[284] Draft Petition, 1775, in Langford, ed., *Edmund Burke*, vol. 3, p. 180.
[285] *Ibid*.
[286] William Woodford to Edmund Pendleton, 9 December 1775, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*. vol. 5, p. 90.
[287] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 81.
[288] Edmund Pendleton to Virginia Committee of Safety, 24 November 1775, in Force, ed., *American Archives* vol. 3, p. 1659.
[289] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 83 ('Keep'); McDonnell, *Politics*, p. 170 ('burn').

The majority of inhabitants, regardless of their political opinions, heard and felt the rough music, the extra-legal justice that the partisans had threatened since the start of the war. Two of the Committee's supporters, Sarah Smith and Mary Webley, stood back and tearfully watched as the militiamen looted and then burnt their homes.[290] One man paid the soldiers two dollars not to burn his property – they did it anyway.[291] In the commotion, Cain O'Hara, a tavern keeper, lost his pregnant wife in the flames.[292] The price of armed opposition or neutrality to partisan rule was clear. The sacking of Norfolk and New York, which took place eight months later in September 1776, involved the active or passive participation of the "American" forces. What did both places have in common? They were each described as a "nest of Tories" – as urban spaces deserving of destruction because of their resistance to partisan rule.[293]

For disaffected persons, the sacking of Norfolk proved that the Virginia militiamen were "savages." This "savagery" pushed three thousand persons to escape with Dunmore on board his fleet.[294] Those who boarded the defeated governor's 'Floating Town', contrary to newspaper-propagated rumours, were not made up of the 'ministerial gentry'.[295] Rather, one observer of the fleet saw 'near 200 sail, large and small', including 'rafts' on which 'poor Families' were living.[296] Poor sanitation bred smallpox, which had raged from the start of 1776 and knew no class, gender, or racial boundaries. The disease was so prevalent that the *Virginia Gazette,* probably in an attempt to dissuade people from joining Dunmore, interviewed a dozen deserters, finding that the 'jail distemper rages with great violence on board Lord Dunmore's fleet…upwards of 150 of whom…have died within a short time.'[297] The anger many of these beleaguered Virginians must have felt on board was shown in a letter printed in the *London Chronicle*, a newspaper which regularly contained dispatches from the war. A Norfolk resident wrote in April 1776 that the 'Shirtmen remain [at] Kemp's Great Bridge, and Suffolk, and stop all provisions coming to the shipping.'[298] This man was forced to send his wife and children to

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[290] Joan R. Gundersen, '"We Bear the Yoke with a Reluctant Impatience": The War for Independence and Virginia's Displaced Women', in John Resch and Walter Sargent, eds., *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilisation and Home Fronts*, intr. by John Shy (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), p. 271.
[291] *Ibid*.
[292] Petition, American Loyalist Claims (NA, London), A.O. Series 13, Volume 32, f. 180.
[293] Benjamin L. Carp, 'The Night the Yankees Burned Broadway: The New York City Fire of 1776', *Early American Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2006), p. 490.
[294] David, *Dunmore's New World*, p. 212, n. 5.
[295] *Ibid*., p. 95 ('Floating Town'); *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 22 December 1775 ('ministerial gentry').
[296] David, *Dunmore's New World*, p. 113.
[297] *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 8 March 1776.
[298] *London Chronicle*, 13 April to 16 April 1776.

stay with a friend, who was encamped in the woods. 'Thank God we are all health', he continued, 'and have plenty of provisions at present, and are in great hopes of soon having forces to drive those savages into their lurking holes.'[299] This Virginian's hopes for revenge would have to wait. On 27 May 1776, Dunmore's fleet arrived at Gwynn's Island in the Chesapeake, but the smallpox outbreak had left the former governor with only a small force of 150 to 200 regulars, and 450 volunteers.[300] Surrounded and facing certain defeat, Dunmore abandoned the Chesapeake for open water and the safety of Britain's military headquarters in New York. The partisans' "savage" violence would remain with these disaffected persons throughout the war and long afterwards.

The Partisans' Enemies as "Savages"

Dunmore's defeat allowed the Committee to respond to the charges of "savagery" without fear of contradiction. Neither the generals William Howe nor William Woodford ever officially communicated what happened in the southeast.[301] As they did in New York, the partisans covered up Norfolk's destruction and blamed the crime on the British.[302] Virginia's newspapers condemned Dunmore for the destruction of this "nest of Tories" and elites deported the fire's survivors.[303] Under the weight of misinformation, it was not surprising that many Virginians accepted the lie. 'This day we had the Confirmation of Norfolk being reduced to ashes by the Men of War and British Troops under Command of Lord Dunmore', John Harrower, an indentured servant in northern Virginia, noted.[304] Without a semblance of irony, Virginia's new navy launched the galley *Norfolk Revenge* in July 1776.[305] Some were shocked by the destruction of Norfolk, but others were pleased. Edmund Pendleton wrote to William Woodford, hoping for a resolution to demolish the 'remaining buildings' so they could not be used as 'comfortable lodgings' for 'our enemy.'[306] The partisans did not get their own way

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[299] *Ibid*.
[300] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 105.
[301] *Ibid*., p. 83.
[302] Carp, 'The Night the Yankees Burned Broadway', p. 511.
[303] Copy of a Letter from Philadelphia, 5 June 1776, in Michael J. Crawford et al, eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2012), p. 386, n. 1.
[304] 10 January 1776, in 'Diary of John Harrower, 1773-1776', *American Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (October 1900), p. 105. The Virginia merchant William Reynolds also blamed Dunmore for the fire. (William Reynolds to George Norton, 30 March 1776, in William Reynolds Letter Books, 1771-1785 [LVA, Richmond, Misc Reel 129], p. 82.) These reports were also published in New York. See 'An American', *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), published in *The Constitutional Gazette* (New York), 24 January 1776.
[305] Journal of the Virginia Navy Board, 22 October 1776, in Crawford et al, eds., *Naval Documents*, vol. 6, p. 422.
[306] Edmund Pendleton to William Woodford, 16 January 1776, in Mays, ed., *Edmund Pendleton*, vol. 1, p. 148.

though. Soon, these varnished lies were subjected to an inquiry. A 1777 report into the Norfolk fire found that 'very few of the houses were destroyed by the enemy, either from their cannonade or by the parties they landed on the wharves'.[307] "Very few" was an understatement: the report noted that the militiamen had destroyed 863 structures whilst the British had only burnt nineteen.[308] But the report also blamed the 'weaknesses and failings of our fellow-citizens, and by that discovery to subject their fortunes to ruin'.[309] In other words, Norfolk and Portsmouth's residents had brought the suffering on themselves. The official report was not made public for sixty years and was then buried in a legislative journal.[310] The partisans' "savagery" was covered by a well-varnished lie: that the Norfolk and Portsmouth inhabitants deserved this treatment because of their traitorous opposition to the "Common Cause."

The partisan leadership were not done with their attempts to frame themselves as "civilised" and their opponents as "savages." In another attempt at narrative control, they tied British troops, native peoples, black persons, and disaffected colonists into a coalition of "savagery." The true radicalisation of epithets, though, was in making the disaffected a part of this alliance. The British troops had been marked for their "savage" conduct; and indigenous and African-descended peoples were already normalised as inhuman "savages." During the war, the partisans' most dramatic rhetorical move was in turning former friends and neighbours into persons unworthy of the name "civilised." Far from forgiving disaffected persons, as Robert Parkinson argues, the radicals attacked their enemies precisely because they were so similar to them.[311] This is not to argue that disaffected persons received worse treatment – or even similar treatment – to persons of colour. For every Norfolk, there were many more Indian towns destroyed in the Ohio valley. Instead, for the partisans at least, the label "savage" operated on a spectrum: on the most benign end stood the redcoats, on the most villainous were enslaved blacks and Indian peoples. The first Congressional act against the "tories," on 2 January 1776, condemned disaffected persons whilst still calling them "Americans." These 'unworthy Americans', the "Tory Act" continued, were 'influenced by the hope or possession of ignominious rewards' to attack the 'friends of American liberty'.[312] However, as the war continued, the "tories" in the backcountry were accused of being just as "savage" as indigenous

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[307] *Journal and Reports of the Commissioners Appointed by the Act of 1777, To ascertain the Losses occasioned to individuals by the burning of Norfolk and Portsmouth, in the Year 1776*, p. 16.
[308] *Ibid*.
[309] *Ibid*.
[310] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 84.
[311] Parkinson, *Common Cause*, ch. 3.
[312] 'The Tory Act', 2 January 1776, *Library of Congress*, <http://www.loc.gov/resource/bdsdcc.00801/>, accessed 20 April 2015.

peoples. The doctor Robert Honyman recounted the violent return of some "tories" to a settlement on the Ohio: 'One Partial Terrey murdered his Father, mother, brothers & sisters, stripped off their scalps, & cut off his father[']s head.'[313] These "tories" were depicted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as 'more savage' than Indians themselves.[314] The fact that disaffected persons were maligned for their "savage" conduct was indicative of the tensions endemic to a civil war.

If Britain's supporters were treated to such opprobrium, the partisans attacked native peoples as the very epitome of "savagery." Although the British cannot be excused from making these racist statements, which had progressively become a normalised feature of anti-Indian discourse, the partisans gave the label "savage" a religious dimension that was perhaps peculiar to the colonists.[315] Philip Vickers Fithian had excoriated the 'heathenish Savages' before.[316] But, in January 1776, upon meeting 'a distressed Woman, a Widow who was thirteen years with the Indians – Her Husband was shot by them', he was infuriated.[317] Scribbling in his diary, he noted that it was 'not a Wonder that these Inhabitants are filled with high Indignation against those savage Heathen.'[318] Over time, the partisans noted with increasing frequency that, because of their societal structures and apparently distinctive ways of war, all Indians, whether small children or hardened warriors, merited the title "savages."[319] Some even declared that children should not be spared because they would grow up to become America's enemies. 'When the hope was expressed…during the outward march, that at least the women and children that might be taken should be spared', remembered one militia leader, 'some of the Monongahelans [Virginians resident on the Monongahela River] slipped in their notions about such matters, with "No! indeed; kill them all, the d—n savage! we are ordered to destroy the heathen off the land - & as for these little Indians, if not killed, they will soon be big ones!'[320] The partisans' normalisation of "savage" for Indian peoples had gone so far that 'semi-savages', as the observer described white Virginians, were prepared to murder women

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313 26 August 1778, Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), pp. 270-271.
314 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 29 August 1781. See also Silver, *Savage Neighbors*, p. 240.
315 For British usage of "savage" with regards to the Caribs in Saint Vincent, see Ulysses Fitzmaurice to 1st Earl of Hillsborough, 10 June 1769, in George Townshend, 1st Marquis Townshend Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 7. The fact that the British were just as rapacious in their attempts to steal land as the partisans can be found in Gregory Evans Dowd, 'Indigenous Peoples without the Republic', *Journal of American History* 104, no. 1 (June 2017), pp. 19-41.
316 26 July 1775, in Albion and Dodson, eds., *Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776*, p. 71.
317 3 January 1776, in *Ibid*., p. 164.
318 *Ibid*.
319 On different methods of war between Europeans and Indians, see Matthew Kruer, 'Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock-Virginia War', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017), pp. 401-436.
320 'Bowman's Campaign of 1779', *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 22, (1913), p. 513.

and children ('these little Indians'), yet he was still not prepared to deride them as "full savages."[321]

Given the hatred and violence shown toward indigenous peoples, it was significant that the partisans also labelled George III a "savage." Making the king a "savage" was an important step on the road to America's independence from Britain. Dunmore's actions and Congress's failed petitions were proof, to some, that the British Constitution, the Parliament, and the king who presided over the whole system were rotten to the core. If George III's proclamation of "rebellion" was not provocative enough, his speech to parliament, which declared that all congressmen who persisted in their treason would be executed, scuppered the attempts of moderates, particularly John Dickinson, to seek reconciliation rather than independence. The King's speech declared that the colonists' 'rebellious war' was being 'carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire.'[322] The Englishman, Thomas Paine, in his bestselling January 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*, attacked this address and argued that 'every line [of the king's speech] convinces…that He, who hunts the woods for prey, the naked and untutored Indian, is less a Savage than the King of Britain.'[323] Paine's appeal to "common sense" – that the people, not elites, were capable of wisdom – was a calculated way of removing the uncertainty created in a period when the thirteen colonies were effectively in "rebellion," but were not yet an independent nation. His attacks against the king's "savagery," which have not been discussed before, struck a chord with Virginian farmers who pushed the gentry elites to create a government in the interests of the majority.[324] The Committee obliged, and on 15 May 1776 instructed its congressional delegates, including Jefferson and Lee, to declare the colonies to be free and independent states. The Committee's resolution in favour of independence acknowledged that Dunmore, the 'King's representative in this Colony', had carried on a 'piratical and savage war against us'.[325] The phrase "King's representative" was now a negative term. Those persons who remained loyal to the Crown were guilty by their association with a "savage" monarch who ordered his "proxies" to do his dirty work. The pre-

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[321] *Ibid*.

[322] 'King George III's Address to Parliament', 27 October, 1775, *Library of Congress*, <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/shots/address.html>, accessed 8 April 2019.

[323] Paine, *Common Sense*, 10 January 1776, in Foner, ed., *Thomas Paine*, p. 47.

[324] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 198-200. Paine's comments are not discussed in Jerrilyn Greene Marston, *King and Congress: The Transfer of Political Legitimacy, 1774-1776* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[325] 'Preamble and Resolution of the Virginia Convention', 15 May 1776, *Avalon*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/const02.asp>, accessed 1 March 2018.

independence period ensured that what people were labelled was often a case of guilt by association.

Conclusion

The partisans' fledgling attempts to distinguish themselves from their British enemies, and the British Empire's attempts to strike back, radicalised the epithets inherited from the imperial crisis. The partisans further transformed these words in order to define who was a meritorious supporter of the "Common Cause." This radicalised struggle, which revolved around who showed sufficient "heat" and loyalty to the cause, had its casualties. Supporters of the Virginia Committee created virtuous idols out of "riflemen" and "Yankees." The increased levels of fear and violence that these terms implied – through their association with frontier conflict and the rough music of provincial America – led many inhabitants in the southeast to side with the British. Out of a fear that their lives and livelihoods would be destroyed, the townsfolk of Norfolk and Portsmouth emphasised their genteel and loyal status as the "friends of government." The rise of opposing sides, both using similar political language and both signifying their merit, created widespread confusion as to who the real "rebels" were in Virginia. Dunmore cut this Gordian knot with his proclamation. He declared that all persons who did not resort to his standard were "rebels." He had turned the southeast from a zone of law into a zone of war – an area where the inhabitants were either with Britain or against them. By raising black troops and raiding plantations along the Chesapeake, Dunmore provided fuel to the rhetorical battle. In response to their ascribed labels as "rebels" and "savages," the Virginian partisans justified their right to rule against "insurgents." In their final and most radical act, Britain's former subjects declared that their king was a "savage."

Once the partisans had attacked the king with such an offensive epithet, a term which robbed the monarch of his moral authority, the progress to independence was accelerated. The final sinew of the British Empire – the bonds between America's loyal subjects and a dutiful king – had been severed. The thirteen colonies became independent on 2 July 1776. For the partisans, the signing of the Articles of Confederation on 15 November 1777, the document which gave birth to the United States, a sovereign nation, also meant that they had to rid themselves of the British terms they had become accustomed to. In the next chapter of the war over epithets, the self-declared "Americans" reformed identity terms of the British and colonial past in order to suit a newly independent present. The partisans sought to understand who they were in reference to who they were not. They declared that they were "citizens," not "British

subjects"; they were "Americans," not Britons; they were glorious "Long Knives," not the "Virginians "and "Long Knives" that many Indian peoples so despised; and they were "republicans," not royalists or aristocrats who derived their right to political office from their wealth or social status. The partisans changed these labels because they felt that they were too dependent on British epithets, such as "whig" and "tory," to prove their merits. The partisans now defined a truly meritorious person as someone who was independent from Britain. This definition included the terms that they used to describe that political status. The partisans' remade epithets after independence to suit the demands of a postcolonial nation, the United States of America.

Chapter 3

"Aliens," "African Americans," and "Long Knives": Reforming Epithets during the Revolution, 1776-82

Introduction

'Your lordship may consider me in what light you please…except that of a British subject.'[1] John Adams's statement, made to the British Admiral Richard Howe at the Staten Island peace conference on 11 September 1776, laid bare how each side conceived of themselves and each other. The conference was held only days after the British captured New York, a defeat that had forced George Washington's Continental Army to retreat through New Jersey into Pennsylvania. With the partisans on their heels, Howe, a British officer more sympathetic to the colonists, thought that peace was possible. He met with a Congressional delegation consisting of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Edward Rutledge from South Carolina.[2] The congressmen wanted the British to recognise America's independence, but were instead referred to as "British subjects." Howe argued that he 'could not acknowledge that body [Congress] which was not acknowledged by the King, whose delegate he was'.[3] Though respectful, he saw the delegation 'merely as gentlemen of great ability and influence'.[4] Benjamin Franklin responded courteously, noting that Howe 'might consider' them 'in any view he thought proper, that they were also at liberty to consider themselves in their real Character', but that the conference should be considered as one 'amongst friends.'[5] That was the moment when John Adams made his stand against subjecthood.[6] His comment astonished Howe who had in fact already put him on a secret list of those who could not be pardoned in the event of a peace. Turning to the others, Howe quipped that Adams was a 'decided character.'[7] After only three hours of debate, and unable to resolve the question of whether the

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1 Robert Treat Paine to Peter Grubb, 18 September 1776, in Edmund Cody Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1923), p. 133. See also 10 October 1776, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), pp. 76-77.

2 O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, p. 99.

3 'Lord Howe's Conference with the Committee of Congress', 11 September 1776, *Founders Online*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-22-02-0358>, accessed 2 August 2019.

4 *Ibid*.

5 *Ibid*.

6 O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, p. 99.

7 *Ibid*.

colonists were "British subjects" or independent "citizens," the conference broke up.[8] Whilst independence had been made in Philadelphia, the meeting at New York raised another problem: if America's inhabitants were not "British subjects," then what would they be called?

The use of the title of "subject" horrified John Adams as much as it did his friend Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. They both knew that epithets were intimately bound up with the issue of national sovereignty.[9] Whether known as "Haudenosaunee" (the "people of the longhouse"), "Britons," or "Americans," these titles distinguished a nation and often made clear its claims to sovereignty. It should be no surprise, then, that the partisans spent much of their attention after independence in trying to strip epithets of their original British meanings and, in so doing, were attempting to craft a national character – a set of characteristics attributed to the people of a nation – that was distinct from that of Britain.[10] This effort, which inspired as much conflict as cooperation from America's multicultural inhabitants, made sense because the United States of America was a postcolonial nation, a country recently independent of an imperial power. Kariann Akemi Yokota, Jill Lepore, Simon Newman, David Waldstreicher, and Len Travers argue that the newly-independent partisans tried to distinguish their language, material culture, ideas, parades, and public events from that of Britain.[11] These scholars have emphasised the ambiguities of early American nationalism: that nation-building in the United States was a slow and contested process, one fraught with insecurities about who "Americans" were and what made them distinctive. 'Americans', Yakota argues, 'feared being seen by the rest of the world, not least the British, as still mired in colonial dependence; they grappled over what constituted the proper balance between innovation and emulation for a free people.'[12] But historians have not recognised that these troubles over cultural independence from Britain extended to the identity terms used to distinguish the former colonists from the British Empire. The partisans' reform

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8 *Ibid*.

9 The understanding of sovereignty in this chapter, as a debate where different groups make claims and counterclaims, is taken from James J. Sheehan, 'The Problem of Sovereignty in European History', *American Historical Review* 111, no. 1 (February 2006), pp. 1-15.

10 Historians have ascribed the growth in "national character" to the period following the Revolution. That is true, but the first hesitant steps took place after independence. See Jaap Verhuel, '"A Peculiar National Character": Transatlantic Realignment and the Birth of American Cultural Nationalism after 1815', *European Journal of American Studies* 7, no. 2 (2012), pp. 1-13; Park, *American Nationalism*, p. 128; and Alan Taylor, 'Dual Nationalisms: Legacies of the War of 1812', in Pietro S. Nivola and Peter J. Kastor, eds., *What So Proudly We Hailed: Essays on the Contemporary Meaning of the War of 1812* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), pp. 67-96.

11 Yokota, *Unbecoming British*; Jill Lepore, *A Is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002); Newman, *Parades*; Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*; and Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*. For the problem of postcolonialism in America, see also Robert Blair St. George, ed., *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

12 Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, p. 9.

of epithets, their reinterpretation of who they were and how they were distinctive from the British Empire, were pressing matters immediately before and long after independence was declared at the Pennsylvania State House on 4 July 1776. This issue of sovereignty also had social and political consequences. Who would follow the "American" cause if it promised only to restore the status quo before independence?

This chapter argues that the repudiation of "subject," with both John Adams and with Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, was part of a wider process: the partisans' attempt to find the words to understand themselves as part of a wider cause and community as distinct from Britain. In order to emphasise their cultural distinctiveness – to take their first tentative steps at developing a national character – the partisans reformed five epithets: "citizen," "British subject," "American," "Long Knife," "Virginian," and "republican." This reform process involved stripping these epithets of their original meanings.[13] The partisans reconsidered who they *were* by asking themselves who they *were not*. They were not dependent "British subjects"; they were independent "citizens." They were not "savage" Britons; they were virtuous "Americans." They were not vicious "Long Knives"; they were glorious "Long Knives" defending Virginia's borders. And they were not tyrannical royalists; they were free "republicans." The principle that underpinned who could use these distinctions, however, was merit. Yet this ideal continued to be bitterly contested. In the midst of what some historians call 'America's first civil war', the inhabitants violently disagreed over who merited these reformed epithets.[14] To the partisans, only those who actively supported independence could use these political labels. The partisans' efforts to define who merited epithets, however, came under attack. The British and their supporters argued that the partisans were "rebels," not glorious "citizens." Moreover, politically marginalised peoples claimed their status as "Americans" because they deserved it. The struggle to enshrine who deserved these terms produced contradictory outcomes for America's inhabitants. Indeed, though the first usage of "African American" took place in the war, the phrase "lynching" also had its origins in this period. The war over words, which had been ongoing since the imperial crisis, reached its violent crescendo in the aftermath of independence.

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[13] My understanding of "reform" as "derivative" is in line with the thinking of postcolonial scholars, such as Partha Chatterjee, who argue that discourses of independence are derivative of what they seek to repudiate. See Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

[14] Hoock, *Scars of Independence*, p. 13.

Citizen and British Subject

The Changing Meanings of "Citizen" and "British Subject"

If the United States was an independent nation, then the partisans needed an epithet for its rightful and most esteemed inhabitants. Figure 23 shows that they chose "citizen," a title fit for an inhabitant who was a meritorious member of both their state and national communities. This was an important shift. In Britain, "citizen" was often synonymous with a denizen or inhabitant of a town or city, and the way that the British used that epithet continued along those very same lines.[15] The partisans took a different approach. They often chose public funerals as the instances in which to celebrate their "citizens," persons who were lauded for their martyrdom in service to the cause.[16] The white elites' attempts to celebrate only those persons who they thought were worthy of being called "citizens" may account for the slow rise in this term's usage. For Virginia's gentry class, "citizen" was a mark of the highest distinction – it was not a label to be accorded to any and all inhabitants of the United States. The growth of an ideal of "citizenship" – that all natural-born inhabitants were worthy of being called "citizens" – took place in the political struggles following the war's conclusion.[17]

There were numerous examples of such funerals for "citizens." Michael Cresap, the indiscriminate murderer of Indian peoples that we met in the first chapter, was one of the first partisans to receive such an honour when he was buried in Trinity Church Cemetery after his death in New York on 18 October 1775. One newspaper esteemed him as a 'gentleman of great reputation as a soldier, and highly esteemed as a citizen.'[18] For many partisans, then, the meritorious title "citizen" and the killing of indigenous peoples were not antithetical.[19] Besides Cresap, the funeral of Peyton Randolph, who had served as the speaker of the House of Burgesses and as the first and third President of the Continental Congress, was another instance of the partisans applying "citizen" to worthy Virginians. Edmund Randolph personally escorted his uncle's body back to Virginia. On 26 November 1776, he noted that 'the remains of our late amiable and beloved fellow citizen, the Hon. Peyton Randolph…were conveyed in a hearse

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15 'Citizen', *OED*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/33513?rskey=if7Xo4&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>, accessed 5 November 2019.

16 Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, p. 18. For a non-Virginian instance of such a funeral, see 13 August 1776, in Albion and Dodson, eds., *Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776*, p. 209.

17 Douglas Bradburn, 'The Problem of Citizenship in the American Revolution', *History Compass* 8, no. 9 (September 2010), p. 1907.

18 *New York Journal*, 19 October 1775.

19 Parkinson, 'From Indian Killer to Worthy Citizen', pp. 98-99.

to the College chapel, attended by the worshipful brotherhood of Freemasons, both Houses of Assembly, a number of other gentlemen, and the inhabitants of this city.'[20] Having heard the funeral oration by the Reverend Thomas Davies 'recommending…the respectable audience to imitate his virtues', the 'spectator[s]…payed their last tribute of tears to…an able counsellor and one of their firmest patriots.'[21] These public celebrations allowed the partisans to reaffirm the rightness of their cause whilst inviting the public to applaud their heroes as true "citizens."[22]

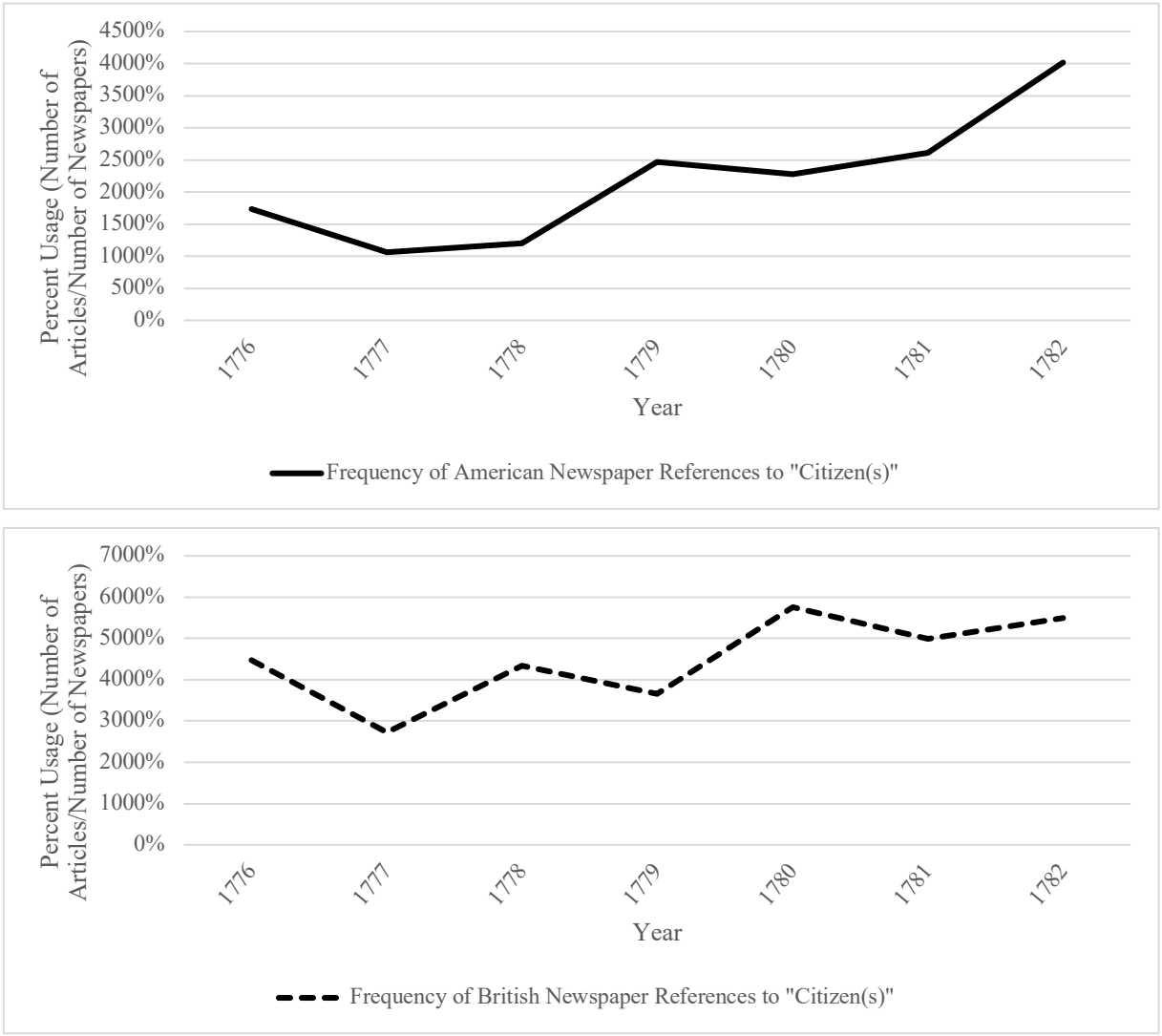

Figure 23: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Citizen(s)," 1776-82.

Still, there was a significant problem with the term "citizen." For one, if the "citizen" was defined as the rightful inhabitant of a particular country, and both Virginia and the United

[20] *Virginia Gazette*, 29 November 1776, in Force, ed., *American Archives*, vol. 3, p. 902.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, p. 29.

States were considered as "countries," then which definition of "citizen" – local or national – should the inhabitants prioritise? David Armitage has shown that it was only in the eighteenth century that the colonists started to think of themselves as part of one imperial body politic. The United States of America was now faced by the same problem as the British Empire: forging unity out of disparate colonies, ethnicities, languages, and religions. This principle affected mobilisation efforts as many Virginians often preferred their local distinctions as "citizens" of a state, rather than their national designation as "citizens of the United States." As Robert Honyman observed in October 1776, 'numbers of the people, who are become entirely disaffected; & complain now or loudly of the tyranny & oppression of their own governors, as they did formerly of the British government.'[23] To address the issue of fractured allegiances to state and nation, the partisans tried to bring worthy "citizens" together against a common enemy: the disaffected persons that they increasingly labelled as "British subjects." This shift in terminology might be one reason why the name "subject," as opposed to "citizen," has been maligned for so long in the historiography as being associated with subjection.[24] The doctor Robert Honyman wrote in his diary that the Congress had 'dissolved [them] from their allegiance & *subjection* to the Crown of G. Brittain & from all political connection with that country.'[25] To Honyman, the distinction between "citizen" and "British subject" was between independence and dependence – liberty in a community of "citizens" or subjection to a monarch that Virginians chastised with epithets including 'Cruel Tyrant', 'opprobrious wretch' and 'sceptered miscreant'.[26]

The Partisans' Usage of "British Subject" for Enemies

To separate friend from foe, the partisans decreed that citizenship was only earnt by balancing one's loyalties to state and nation, and that meant that this status carried as many obligations as subjecthood. After all, citizenship, like subjecthood, carried rights as well as duties to the state. Congress's imposition of a treason act, modelled on that of Great Britain, ensured that America's inhabitants had to support their rulers or give up their titles as "citizens."[27]

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[23] 10 October 1776, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), pp. 80-81. On average, Virginia, the most populous state in North America, only managed to fill 40 to 45 per cent of its quota for the Continental Army and, after 1778, its share declined to less than 20 per cent. (Selby, *Revolution*, p. 131.)

[24] Muller, *Subjects and Sovereign*, pp. 3-4. For "citizen" replacing "subject" in popularity, see Parker, *Making Foreigners*, pp. 51-52.

[25] 23 July 1776, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), p. 56.

[26] 4 March 1777, in *Ibid*., p. 114.

[27] Bradley Chapin, *The American Law of Treason: Revolutionary and Early National Origins* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. 36.

Virginia's Constitution, established in June 1776, did not mention the word "citizen," but rather established that government was 'instituted for the benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community'.[28] Those enemies who threatened the community of "citizens" – "the people" – were denounced as "British subjects." Congress conveyed this notion in a new law enacted one month after the Declaration was passed. '[I]t is become necessary', they resolved, 'to consider as enemies all the subjects of the king of great Britain and all others who aid, abet, adhere to or in any way assist him in his unjust & cruel designs against these states'.[29] This Act targeted property 'belonging to any subject or subjects of the said king' or anyone who 'adhere[d] to him or in any wise aid[ed] or abet[ted] him in his unjust war against these states'.[30] The Virginia Assembly followed Congress's lead in proscribing "subjects'" rights to liberty and property. Robert Honyman, in December 1776, reported in his diary that a new bill had been passed, which instituted fines and imprisonment at the discretion of a jury. The crimes listed in the bill were for 'maintaining the authority of the King & Parliament of Brittain' and 'endeavouring to alienate the affections of the people from the present government'.[31] The bill resolved that 'all subjects of the King of Brittain' were 'to leave the Country in 40 days; particularly mentioning all Merchants, Factors agents &c.'[32] Even though the partisans often accused merchants of inflating Virginia's currency, these persecutory statutes did not result in a reign of terror.[33] They instead further entrenched rhetorical divisions between rightful "citizens" and dependent "British subjects."

The partisans ensured that these distinctions were carried in the statute books and were vigorously enforced on the ground. Quakers sought neutrality and as a result were punished for their refusal to align with the new republic and become "citizens." Condemned by the partisans as "British subjects," the Quakers, who, because of their belief that God lived within everyone, refused to take part in violence and appealed to conscience. As a result of their conscientious objection to the test oath, enacted in August 1775, they were subjected to treble taxation, and in September 1777, twenty Philadelphian dissidents were exiled to Winchester, Virginia.[34] Robert Pleasants, a Virginian Friend, made his objections to these policies clear when he claimed that paying the tax would 'make us parties in the destruction, the violence and

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[28] Final Draft of the Declaration of Rights, 12 June 1776, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 1, p. 287.
[29] Hancock to Washington, 26 July 1776, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: War Series*, vol. 5, p. 474.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] 31 December 1776, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), pp. 99-100.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 100.
[33] Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 15 November 1778, in Ballagh, ed., *Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 1, p. 451 ("inflating"); Chapin, *American Law of Treason*, pp. 63-64 ("reign").
[34] A. Glenn Crothers, *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth: The Society of Friends in Northern Virginia, 1730-1865* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), p. 57 ("treble") and 49 ("exiled").

confusion consequent to such intestine commotion'.[35] The Pennsylvania Quaker, James Hutchinson, who served as the surgeon-general to the Continental troops, thought the Friends were being unduly attacked on both sides.[36] They were 'condemned by the Whigs', he wrote in March 1777, 'as the most daring Enemies to American Liberty and are numbered by them, among the constant subjects of King George and steady supporters of usurpation & cruelty'.[37] The Quakers had little room for manoeuvre. If their principles, Hutchinson continued, were 'referred only to the Congress it is perfect Toryism, if referred only to the…[British] it is pure Whiggism, but if referred [to] as it should be…the admonition could be neither that of a Whig nor Tory…but of a sober religious Quaker.'[38] He further noted that they had 'once lived under a British constitution'.[39] Following independence their demands were simple, they required 'Religious liberty[.] Whether they are to enjoy such a liberty under the Government of a British King, or the Government of an American Congress is of no consequence to them'.[40] The Friends found that they could not remain neutral indefinitely. By the end of the war, the Quakers had abandoned their ideal of a separate virtuous group of individual believers and expressed a willingness to conform and serve the community of "citizens."[41]

In the western counties, where the authority of Congress and the Virginia Assembly were even more disputed than in the east, military commanders defined "subjects" and "citizens" at will. The impetus for categorising friends and enemies was the high level of disaffection in Virginia's borderlands. With France, Britain, Spain, and the United States contesting America's western borders, the inhabitants there pivoted between these nations.[42] The United States responded to this neutrality with force. In February 1777 a 'Party of Americans' took possession of Natchez on the Mississippi River.[43] On arrival, the captain negotiated a treaty that 'preserved' all neutral property, 'but all that belonged to British subjects was plundered.'[44] Marching to retake Fort Vincennes from Henry Hamilton, the British governor of Detroit, the Virginian general George Rogers Clark offered a similar choice to that

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35 Robert Pleasants to Thomas Nicholson, 5 December 1779, in Adair P. Archer, ed., 'The Quaker's Attitude Towards the Revolution', *William and Mary Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (July 1921), p. 179.
36 John Woolf Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania*, vol. 1 (New York and Chicago: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1978), p. 740.
37 Response to Epistle, in James Hutchinson diary, 26 February 1777 to 16 March 1777 (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mss.B.H97d.1).
38 *Ibid*.
39 *Ibid*.
40 *Ibid.*
41 See Sydney V. James, 'The Impact of the American Revolution on Quakers' Ideas about Their Sect', *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (July 1962), 360-382; and Crothers, *Quakers Living in the Lion's Mouth*, p. 39.
42 Griffin, *American Leviathan*, pp. 165-166.
43 16 July 1778, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), p. 253.
44 *Ibid*.

proposed by the captain at Natchez. Possibly with the Natchez incident in mind, the first Governor of Virginia, Patrick Henry, begged him to 'show Humanity to such British subjects'.[45] Henry argued that those persons who gave 'evidence of their attachment to the State…be treated as fellow Citizens & their persons and property duly secure…But of those people will not accede to these reasonable Demands, they must feel the miseries of war'.[46] Clark's actions had precipitated this letter. He had branded one suspected traitor and was looking for an excuse to hang the next.[47] Furthermore, after capturing Vincennes on 4 July 1778, he had given its French inhabitants a chance to become "citizens." He offered to 'treat them as citizens of the Republic of Virginia (in the [territorial] limits of which they are) and to protect their persons and property' provided that they swear an oath of allegiance.[48] With their property on the line, the French inhabitants obliged and declared: 'Long live the Congress.'[49] Whether from Natchez or Vincennes, those persons whom the partisans branded as "British subjects" were deemed unworthy of holding property in the United States.

The Increasing Divisions Between "Citizens" and "British Subjects"

Whilst military officers, like Clark, made spontaneous decisions about the treatment of internal enemies, the Carlisle peace commission from Britain afforded the partisans another opportunity to resolve the distinctions between "subjects" and "citizens." Two years after the Staten Island meeting, the political calculus had changed. John Burgoyne had surrendered his entire army after the Battle of Saratoga on 17 October 1777.[50] Weary of war, the Earl of Carlisle offered self-rule to the thirteen states, including parliamentary representation, if they re-joined the imperial fold as "British subjects."[51] Congress had two responses to these overtures. First, many congressmen were suspicious of Britain's motives. Henry Laurens argued in April 1778 that Carlisle's proposals were 'calculated to ensnare weak minds, & to disunite the Citizens of

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45 Patrick Henry to George Rogers Clark, 2 January 1779, in Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, 1749-1944 (VHS, Richmond), Section 119.
46 *Ibid*.
47 George Rogers Clark to Fernando de Leyba, 23 January 1779, in 'Clark-Leyba Papers', *American Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (October 1935), p. 105.
48 George Rogers Clark to the Inhabitants of Vincennes, 13 July 1778, in James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers 1781-1784*, vol. 4 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1924), p. 51.
49 Oath of Inhabitants of Vincennes, 20 July 1778, in *Ibid*., p. 56.
50 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 303.
51 Anthony Gregory, '"Formed for Empire": The Continental Congress Responds to the Carlisle Peace Commission', *Journal of the Early Republic* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2018), pp. 643-672.

these States.'[52] Robert Honyman also wrote on 18 May that the treaty 'show[ed] the folly, weakness & wickedness of the British ministry', who had used this 'overture…to conquer America; & with a view to break the union of the Colonies; to amuse foreign powers hinder them from assisting America, & likewise to make their own subjects concur with them in carrying on this war on account of America's rejecting these offers.'[53] Laurens and Honyman were right to worry. Like the British, many of America's inhabitants wanted a return to normality.[54] Congress's second response to the Carlisle commission was focused on the title "subject." The Congress attacked the commission's idea that 'these states' were the 'subjects of the crown'.[55] Richard Morris, in an October 1778 article, expanded on these arguments. '[A]s to the subjection', he wrote, '[…] If, as you say, we are subjects, then on general principles you are not bound to keep faith with rebels.'[56] It was insulting to Morris that the Carlisle commission had sent letters 'from a Secretary of State [and not the king], which neither with foreign nations, nor even with your own subjects is worth a pinch of snuff'.[57] The failure of two separate peace commissions – the Staten Island meeting, described above, and the Carlisle overtures – ensured that, bar a defeat, the partisans had resolved never again to be considered as "British subjects."

Instead of acceding to Britain's demands, the Virginia Assembly decided on a final definition of "subjects": they were "aliens," persons who owed their allegiance to another country. This status had implications for the properties of disaffected persons. The British invasions in May 1779 and again in October 1780, which led to hundreds of disaffected persons in the southeast again joining the royal standard, resulted in harsher laws against "subjects."[58] According to George Mason, the 'Lines of Distinction' were drawn between 'Citizens', and rightless 'aliens, enemies to this Commonwealth'.[59] This change in policy was reflected in two cases. Two years before the first British invasion, Sarah Jerdone, the widow of a Scottish merchant in Virginia, had successfully petitioned the Assembly in order to save her son's property. Her son had been in Scotland at the time of Lexington and was consequently denounced as a "subject." In her petition, Jerdone proved his just right to property as a

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52 Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., Apr. 20, 1778, in Paul H. Smith et al, eds., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 9 (Washington: Library of Congress, 1993), pp. 458-459.
53 18 May 1778, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), pp. 222-223.
54 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 340.
55 17 June 1778, in Ford, ed., *Continental Congress*, vol. 11, p. 615.
56 'An American', in *Pennsylvania Packet*, 20 October 1778.
57 *Ibid*.
58 Selby, *Revolution*, pp. 205-206 ("invasions"); Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats*, p. 110 ("hundreds").
59 George Mason to Richard Henry Lee, 4 June 1779, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 2, pp. 507-508.

"citizen."[60] 'That Francis Jerdone [her husband]', she pleaded to the Assembly, 'being seised & possessed of a valuable real & personal estate which he acquired by his labour & industry did by his will give & dispose of the same to…your petitioners'.[61] Jerdone may have noticed the irony that her husband's 'industry' could be contrasted with the abundant wealth and status that Virginia's gentry had inherited from feudal entail (a form of trust, recently abolished in the state, in which a will determined who inherited an estate).[62] Three years after Jerdone's petition, in a marked shift from their previously-lenient policy, Virginia's cash-strapped Assembly declared that anyone who adhered to the enemy were "British subjects."[63] The law ensured that the estates of 'all aliens, enemies to this Commonwealth' could be sold and the money deposited in the public treasury.[64] The second case involved the merchant George Horner, who had been away from the new state on business and had had his estate confiscated as 'British Property'.[65] He was forced to take the oath of allegiance 'whereby he hath become a Citizen'.[66] Much had changed since Jerdone's petition. "British subject" – a title so meritorious that the colonists had fought to restore it during the imperial crisis – was now equivalent to an alien, a foreigner, someone who did not belong to the country in which they had lived, sometimes for generations.

Some Virginians, who called themselves "Lynch men," still thought these laws against resident "aliens" did not go far enough. The vigilante attacks against the disaffected in Virginia's western counties occurred because of widespread fears that the legal system could not punish suspected "tories." Without a 'system of Policy', the inhabitants of Fincastle County argued in June 1776, 'this Fertile Country will afford a saf[e] Assylum to those, whose Principles are Inimical to American Freedom'.[67] They were deeply frustrated with the inability of the court system to restore order. In response to this disaffection, Charles Lynch, who ran the local lead mine, and his supporters from Pittsylvania County, sought to regulate the

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60 Linda L. Sturtz, 'Sarah Jerdone: Negotiating Revolution', in Cynthia A. Kierner and Sandra Gioia Treadway, eds., *Virginia Women: Their Lives and Times* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), p. 105.

61 Petition of Sarah Jerdone to the General Assembly, 1777, Jerdone Family Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 39.1 J47), Small Collections, Addition 17, f. 133.

62 *Ibid*. See Holly Brewer, 'Entailing Aristocracy in Colonial Virginia: "Ancient Feudal Restraints" and Revolutionary Reform', *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (April 1997), pp. 307-346.

63 An act concerning escheats and forfeitures from British subjects, May 1779, in Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 10, p. 69

64 *Ibid*.

65 Memorial of George Horner to General Assembly, 30 June. 1780, Photostat Collection (Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg).

66 *Ibid*.

67 Petition of Inhabitants of Western Parts of Fincastle County, 15 June 1776, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 7, p. 518.

backcountry.[68] Lynch was to become infamous in the United States as he gave his name to "lynching," the execution of persons who were seen to act against the white community's interests without a legal trial.[69] And whether white or black, those who took an active stance against the partisans suffered the full brunt of 'Lynchs Law'.[70] They nailed people's thumbs to posts till they shouted "Liberty!," whipped recalcitrant individuals, and hanged the disaffected from trees.[71] In an October 1780 proclamation, the 'Lynch men', as some who remembered these events referred to them, denounced the 'vile miscreants' who 'deprive[d] honest men of their just rights and property…[men who] hath hitherto escaped the civil power with impunity, it being almost useless…to have recourse to our laws to suppress and punish those freebooters'.[72] Theft and robbery were often synonymous with a bad neighbor.[73] That meaning also applied in this case. Virginians were intent on restoring law and order against "freebooters," disaffected adventurers in search of plunder, who flouted the state's legal system and attacked their communities with impunity. To that end they formed an 'association' that promised corporal punishment for 'any villainy…committed within our neighbourhood'.[74] They made clear that an attack on one "citizen" was an affront to the community of Virginian "citizens" as a whole.

The Contradictions in "Citizen"

The partisans' application of "citizens" to only the most meritorious persons gave both their politically marginalised supporters and bitter opponents an avenue through which to expose the contradictions in "citizen." They used gender, rebellion, slavery, the French alliance, and political violence to great effect in undermining the partisans' claim to be virtuous "citizens." Since the partisans made sure that people had to earn their titles through good deeds, the

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[68] For other backcountry regulators in the south, who called themselves "moderators" and had a similar proclivity for vigilante violence, see Rachel N. Klein, *The Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), pp. 72-74.

[69] Christopher Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch: Extralegal Punishment and Violence in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 15.

[70] Charles Lynch to David Moss, 11 May 1782, in Governors' Letters Received (LVA, Richmond).

[71] Gordon Godfrey Fralin, Jr., 'Charles Lynch, originator of the term Lynch law' (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1955), p. 58 ("Liberty!"); Waldrep, *Many Faces of Judge Lynch*, p. 15 ("whipped"); Catherine Van Cortlandt Matthew, *Andrew Ellicott: His Life and Letters* (New York: The Grafton Press, 1908), p. 221 ("hung").

[72] Matthew, *Andrew Ellicott*, p. 221 ('Lynch men'); Proclamation from Inhabitants of Pittsylvania County, 22 October 1780, in Edgar Allen Poe, 'Lynch's Law', *Southern Literary Messenger* 2 (May 1836), p. 389 ('vile').

[73] Cornelia H. Drayton, *Women Before the Bar: Gender, Law, and Society in Connecticut, 1639-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 295.

[74] Proclamation from Pittsylvania County, 22 October 1780, in Poe, 'Lynch's Law', p. 389.

gendered contradictions in who deserved to be called a "citizen" were ripe to be exploited. Although native-born Virginian women were excluded from voting, the widow Hannah Lee Corbin claimed her status as a "citizen" – as a meritorious member of the community. She may have expected that independence and its promise of natural rights would change women's lives, especially the situation of widows, who, unlike married women, could buy and sell property and engage in contracts and other business and legal transactions. The letters she sent to her brother, the signatory to the Declaration of Independence, Richard Henry Lee, have not survived. However, his response to a letter received in March 1778 shows that Corbin understood the Assembly's taxation laws as "taxation without representation." She attacked Virginia's menfolk for using the same logic and idioms that they had used to rationalise their separation from Britain. 'You complain that Widows are not represented', Lee responded, 'and that being temporary Possessors of their estates, ought not to be liable to the Tax.'[75] Corbin had a point to prove. The logic of limited manhood suffrage was that unpropertied individuals had no interest in the community and therefore had no right to have a say in its government.[76] This logic made little sense for widows, who played an important role in the running of the household as an economic unit. They administered their late husband's estates and took over the management of their businesses.[77] With logic on Corbin's side, Lee appealed to female sentiments: that women would find politics a dirty business. He lectured his sister that 'Perhaps 'twas thought rather out of character for Women to press into those tumultuous Assemblies of Men where the business of choosing Representative[s] is concluded.'[78] Whilst Jefferson and Lee claimed merit as "citizens" in contrast to dependent "subjects," Corbin and other women argued that they, too, merited inclusion as "citizens."

Britain's supporters in the metropole also attacked the partisans for their attempts to call themselves "citizens." They continued to argue that America's new "citizens" were "rebels" without a just cause. Two months after independence, the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham noted that America's invasion of Quebec, which ended in defeat in December 1775, proved that they were usurpers subjecting North America to tyrannical rule. 'If the right of enjoying life be unalienable', he wrote, 'whence came their invasion of his Majesty's province of Canada? Whence the unprovoked destruction of so many lives of the inhabitants of that

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75 Richard Henry Lee to Hannah Corbin, 17 March 1778, in Ballagh, ed., *Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 1, p. 392.

76 J. R. Pole, *Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), p. 37.

77 Sara P. Damiano, 'Writing Women's History Through the Revolution: Family Finances, Letter Writing, and Conceptions of Marriage', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (October 2017), p. 707. See also Linda L. Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial Virginia* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

78 Richard Henry Lee to Hannah Corbin, 17 March 1778, in Ballagh, ed., *Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 1, p. 392.

province?'[79] One year later, the colonial sympathiser James Aitken attempted to sabotage the ports of Portsmouth and Bristol. Aitken was executed and, in response, Parliament further entrenched pre-existing distinctions between "subjects" and traitorous "pirates."[80] Parliament suspended *habeas corpus*, a legal principle against unauthorised detention, and expanded the definition of treason to include 'Persons charged with or suspected of, High Treason committed in North America, or on the High Seas, or the Crime of Piracy'.[81] Opposition politicians launched a broadside at the government's continued labelling of the colonists as "pirates." Independence may have tempered his support for the "American" cause, but the parliamentarian Edmund Burke believed that 'persons, who make a naval war upon us…may be *rebels*; but to call and treat them as *pirates*, is confounding'.[82] Naming their former brethren "pirates," Burke argued, deprived them of the 'safety from the pity of mankind, or to his reputation from their general feelings'.[83] He was uneasy about turning natural-born British subjects into "pirates," persons who, as we saw in the last chapter, were considered as the "enemies of mankind."[84] British commanders did not share Burke's worries about the partisans' reputation though. After seizing Egg Harbour in New Jersey in October 1778, Henry Clinton reported that the 'seamen were employed all that Evening…in demolishing the village which was the principal resort of this Nest of Pirates.'[85] Honour and the laws of nations, these commanders argued, were luxuries unsuited to "rebels" and "pirates." The only funeral these "citizens" deserved, they implied, was one that followed a swift execution.

Following criticisms of the elite "citizens" as mere "rebels," many black persons argued that these meritorious Virginians were hypocritical slavers. Since forty-one out of fifty-six people who signed the Declaration were slaveholders, slavery was another common theme in criticisms of slaveholder "citizens" and their purported subjection to George III. On 13 January 1777, the Bostonian black abolitionist Prince Hall and other Freemasons of colour tabled a 'Petition of a Great Number of Negroes' to the Massachusetts House of Representatives.[86] This

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79 Jeremy Bentham to John Lind, 2 September 1776, in Timothy L. S. Sprigge, ed., *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 1 (London: Athlone Press, 1968), pp. 341-343.

80 Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, 'Arson, Treason and Plot: Britain, America and the Law, 1770-1777', *History* 341 (2015), p. 387.

81 William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*, vol. 19 (London, 1813), pp. 4-6.

82 Letters to the Sheriffs of Bristol, 3 April 1777, in Langford, ed., *Edmund Burke*, vol. 3, p. 291.

83 *Ibid*.

84 Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, p. 16.

85 Clinton to Secretary of State, 18 October 1778, Clinton Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Series 3, Book 1, p. 89.

86 Chernoh M. Sesay, 'The Revolutionary Black Roots of Slavery's Abolition in Massachusetts', *New England Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (March 2014), pp. 127-128.

petition questioned the validity of the partisans' arguments. Chernoh Sesay argues that, while the petition was not Virginian in origin, this Bostonian document and others of a similar nature, were one of the first times in the colonies that black persons successfully lobbied the government to address the slavery question.[87] This petition therefore needs to be discussed as it was an important milestone in the rise of black abolitionism. First, the petitioners argued that the partisans had 'reduce[d]' blacks 'to a State of Bondage and Subjection'.[88] Second, 'every principle from which America has acted in the course of her unhappy difficulties with Great-Britain, pleads stronger than [a] thousand arguments in favour of your Petitioners.'[89] If restored to 'that freedom which is the natural right of all Men', they argued, the partisans would no longer be 'chargeable with the inconsistency of acting, themselves, the p[l]an which they condemn and oppose in others'.[90] The petitioners noted that it was time to turn Jefferson's words in the Declaration into action and apply the same natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all inhabitants regardless of skin colour.

Black abolitionists were not the only persons to highlight slavery as a contradiction at the heart of the partisan "citizens'" cause. The recent English immigrant Nicholas Cresswell argued that slavery was the new reality for both black and white persons on the continent. Following his flight from Virginia, Cresswell arrived in the devastated city of New York in June 1777. On seeing that 'once flourishing opulent and happy City', which the partisans had destroyed because of fears it had become a "nest of Tories," he may have been driven to pick up his pen. In his diary, he noted that the inhabitants were 'being crowded together in so small [a] compass almost like herrings in a Barrel, most of them very dirty and not a small number sick of some disease the Itch, Pox, Fever or Flux'.[91] Close to a month later (and still stuck on board his transport to England), he reflected on what he had witnessed after three years in America. 'These unhappy wretches [the partisans]', he wrote after the one-year anniversary of independence, 'have substituted, Tyranny, Oppression and Slavery for Liberty and Freedom.'[92] And he knew where to lay the blame: 'The Congress, under the fallacious pretence of nursing the Tender Plant Liberty…have actually tore it up by the very root.'[93] The *Happy United* and Blessed Independent States', he mocked, as a reward for their glorious struggle, are to be put

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87 *Ibid*, pp. 100-101.
88 Petition of a "Great Number of Negroes" to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 13 January 1777, in Aptheker, ed., *Documentary History*, vol. 1, p. 10.
89 *Ibid*.
90 *Ibid*.
91 24 June 1777, in Gill, Jr., and Curtis III, eds., *A Man Apart*, pp. 172-173.
92 19 July 1777, in *Ibid*., p. 182.
93 *Ibid*.

in the Possession of the Brazils.'[94] The act of equating the United States with Brazil, a Portuguese colony and one of the largest slave societies in the America, was a potent criticism.[95] To Creswell, "American" freedom really meant "American" slavery.

The disaffected did not just compare the United States to Brazil. America's treaty of alliance with France, signed on 6 February 1778, was yet another contradiction in the partisans' claims of free "citizenship" that was targeted by their opponents. The Pope's Day celebration of the failed Gunpowder Plot against Parliament, which took place each year on 5 November, was proof of widespread anti-Catholic sentiment.[96] The treaty changed the nature of these feelings. Anti-Catholicism and Francophobia subsided amongst the partisans, but disaffected Virginians continued to hold onto these prejudices.[97] Many argued that America's "citizens" were really the French "subjects" of King Louis XVI. Stephen Conway has examined how the French alliance resulted in America's inhabitants being "othered" by Britons.[98] These attitudes were also evident in Virginia's western counties. '[T]he People on all Quarters…and From Carolina', one person reported in 1779, 'says that the country is sold to the French, and that they may as well fight under the King of Great Britain as to be subjects to France'.[99] With the treaty, the idea of America being sold and made dependent to the French was a live issue for many inhabitants. Similar comments were made in intelligence briefings on potential insurrections. Two men 'came to my House abt. March 1779', one man accused of treason confessed, 'and…told me, we were sold to France & the Country was lost, but the Chief of the Country were for joining the [British] King.'[100] The partisans' opponents swore an 'Oath to the King' and one year later resolved 'to arm the King's Friends' and assemble 'when called upon & march to join the English.'[101] The notion of being a 'King's Friend' was similar in meaning to a "friend of government."[102] By using this term, this Virginian emphasised his service to the ruling monarch, but duly expected favours and services in return for his loyalty. One farmer

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94 *Ibid*., p. 183.
95 Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 168.
96 Brendan McConville, 'Pope's Day Revisited, "Popular" Culture Reconsidered', *Explorations in Early American Culture*, vol. 4 (2000), p. 261. See also Francis D. Cogliano, *No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England* (Wesport: Greenwood, 1995).
97 Maura Jane Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 96-97.
98 Stephen Conway, 'From Fellow-Nationals to Foreigners: British Perceptions of the Americans, circa 1739-1783', *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (January 2002), p. 68.
99 James McGavock to William Preston, 15 April 1779, in William Preston Papers, 1727-1896 (VHS, Richmond, Mss1 P9267 f FA2), Item 1017.
100 John Henderson's confession, 1779, in William Preston Papers, 1778-1782 (microfilm, LVA, Richmond Auditor's Item 230).
101 *Ibid*.
102 *Ibid*.

understood the cost of being the king's enemy. As a result of choosing the 'country [America]' over the 'king', he wrote to a friend, 'he never would enjoy a foot of land in America'.[103] In redefining citizenship as French subjecthood, the disaffected asserted that the partisans – and not those who were labelled as "subjects" or "aliens" – did not deserve their properties on the continent.

The partisans' disaffected opponents also answered the Congress's Declaration with their own 'Declaration of many of the Natives and Citizens of America, who have renounced the Authority of Congress'.[104] Though it arrived late in the war, this document was published in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1781.[105] In a possibly strategic move, the declaration's signatories labelled themselves as the 'Natives and Citizens of America' – the true "citizens" of British colonies that had been usurped by a tyrannical Congress.[106] After proving their merit, these "citizens" then reclaimed the ideals of life, liberty, and happiness that Jefferson had appropriated to justify resistance to Britain. They held 'these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal'.[107] Unlike Congress, they believed that when 'a long train of the most licentious despotic abuses…evinces a design to reduce them under anarchy, and the distractions of democracy…it becomes their duty, to disclaim and renounce all allegiance to such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.'[108] Instead of a new world of liberty and freedom, the declaration argued that America was a familiar scene of mob rule. 'The history of Congress', it continued, 'is a history of continued weakness, inconsistency, violation of the most sacred obligations of all public faith and honour, and of usurpation'.[109] In a long list of injuries, they blamed Congress for inciting 'foreign mercenaries'.[110] (The most prominent foreign soldier in the Continental Army being the Marquis de Lafayette, the French general who served without pay as George Washington's right-hand officer.) And they charged "Americans," who tried to gain the support of Indian peoples, including the Catawba nation in

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[103] *Ibid*.
[104] Declaration of many of the Natives and Citizens of America, who have renounced the Authority of Congress, 1781, in Board of Trade and Secretaries of State: America and West Indies, Original Correspondence (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 82, f. 244.
[105] For other responses to the Declaration of Independence, see R. W. G. Vail, ed., 'The Loyalist Declaration of Dependence of November 28, 1776', *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (April 1947), pp. 68-71; Thomas Hutchinson, *Strictures upon the Declaration of the Congress at Philadelphia; In a Letter to a Noble Lord* (London, 1776); and James Macpherson, *The Rights of Great Britain asserted against the Claims of America: being an answer to the Declaration of the General Congress* (London, 1776).
[106] Declaration of the Natives and Citizens of America, in Original Correspondence (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 82, f. 244.
[107] *Ibid*.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] *Ibid*.
[110] *Ibid*.

the Carolinas, with an 'undistinguished destruction to ages, sexes, and conditions on our frontiers.'[111] The signatories showed none of the partisans' initial unease about the distinction between "subject" and "citizen." For them the choice was simple: the colonists could choose the Congress and its French allies, the latter of whom had been Britain's longstanding enemy, or they could reclaim their status as "British subjects."

American

"Americanness" and Britishness

In order to solve the problem of citizenship – that many inhabitants were torn between their local and national allegiances – the partisans attacked "British subjects," but they also made "American" a more respectable title than "Briton." Linda Colley argues that "Britishness" was made in contradistinction to France.[112] In an ironic move given that France became the United States's ally, the partisans used that same tactic against the British. Having revitalised "American" in the imperial crisis and associated that label with provincial virtue before independence, the partisans now used that epithet to highlight how they were different from Britain. Though the term "American" plateaued in usage after 1775, Figure 24 indicates that it remained popular. "American" was ubiquitous in various printed media as a way to contrast brave "Americans" with "savage" British soldiers. George Washington, in a January 1777 letter, said that he 'expected that humanity and tenderness to women and children will distinguish brave Americans, contending for liberty, from infamous mercenary ravagers, whether British or Hessians.'[113] The newspapers also carried these sentiments within their pages. On 1 February 1777, Drake's Farm in New Jersey saw a group of British soldiers kill seven wounded partisan troops. The men's commanding officer, Brigadier General Adam Stephen, was outraged. He complained to the British general Sir William Erskine 'of the savage cruelty of the British troops'.[114] 'It now appears that Britons', Stephen lamented in the *Virginia Gazette*, 'are become strangers to humanity, and deaf to the entreaties of the brave, after the

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[111] *Ibid*.
[112] Linda Colley, 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 4 (October 1992), pp. 309-329. For an example of an American historian who does look at "Americanness" versus the British "other" in the early republic, see Sam W. Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2010).
[113] General Orders, January 1, 1777, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: War Series*, vol. 7, p. 499.
[114] *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 5 April 1777.

misfortune of having fallen wounded into their power'.[115] Already angered at the treatment of continental and militia soldiers, imprisoned in the cramped prison ships that dotted the Hudson River in New York, "Americans" argued that these British crimes against the laws of war 'surpass[ed] that of the savages'.[116]

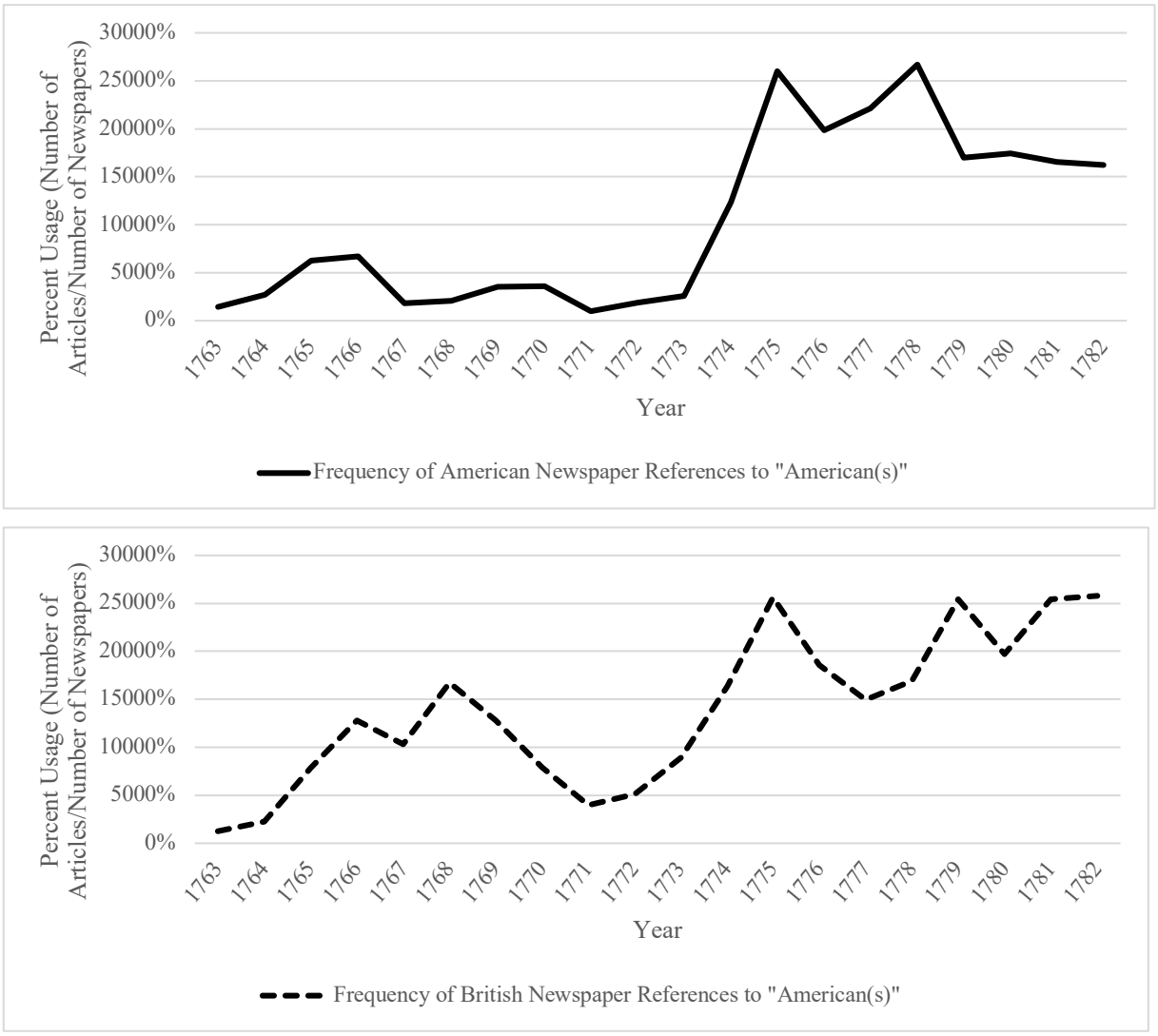

Figure 24: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "American(s)," 1763-82.

Besides targeting the redcoats and their allies, the newspapers contrasted the British generals who led these "savages," such as Henry Clinton, with George Washington. As a result of his recent military service against Britain, Washington was acclaimed in the newspapers as an example to all because of his heroic leadership, and for balancing his dual loyalties to state

[115] 'Copy of a letter sent to Sir William Erskine, complaining of the savage cruelty of the British troops', in *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 7 March 1777.
[116] Hoock, *Scars of Independence*, pp. 215-216 ("prison ships"); 'Copy', in *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 7 March 1777 ('savages').

and nation.[117] He was seen to exemplify the attributes of a true "American." 'Let not the names of Brutus or Camillis be remembered', a Virginian wrote in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* in April 1777, 'whilst that of WASHINGTON is to be found in the annals of America.'[118] The article continued: 'Great in the cabinet as in war, he shines with unrivalled splendour…as a statesman and a general…his disinterested patriotism and domestic virtues command universal veneration.'[119] Against a 'mercenary army more venal than a court favourite, [and] more savage than a band of Tartars', the writer continued, Washington had led 'men animated by liberty and the sacred love of their country.'[120] These ideals were important because the cause was under threat. The Continental Army was disbanding due to the end of soldiers' enlistment periods, which lasted from one to three years. That month, Washington had pleaded to his disbanding troops that 'all distinctions [be] sunk in the name of an American…he will be the best Soldier, and the best Patriot, who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his Station, or from whatever part of the Continent, he may come'.[121] These entreaties were made in the newspapers too. 'Gracious Heaven!', the newspaper writer continued concerning the defeat at Long Island, 'Can any Virginian, his countryman, or can any American, who regards him as the saviour of their states, reflect on his situation at that juncture, without horror?'[122] However, he believed that America had 'nothing to dread whilst you are engaged in so glorious a cause, and blessed with a WASHINGTON for a leader.'[123] Even Britons recognised that their leaders were a poor imitation of the manly qualities that the partisans ascribed to Washington – virtues of steadfastness and love of country that the partisans used to inspire America's inhabitants to come together as "Americans."[124]

Preachers ensured that Washington was not the only "American" who showed these masculine qualities. Religious figures of all denominations equated Christian virtue with being a true "American." James Byrd has found that almost two thousand sermons were preached in 1776 alone (more than any year previously recorded).[125] The failure to protect one's home and family, many of these preachers noted, condemned non-"Americans" as false Christians.[126]

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[117] Barry Schwartz, 'George Washington and the Whig Conception of Heroic Leadership', *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 1 (February 1983), pp. 18-33.
[118] *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 5 April 1777.
[119] *Ibid*.
[120] *Ibid*.
[121] General Orders, 1 August 1776, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: War Series*, vol. 5, p. 534.
[122] *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 5 April 1777.
[123] *Ibid*.
[124] Bickham, *Making Headlines*, p. 205.
[125] Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 16.
[126] Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, pp. 15-16.

The Massachusetts preacher Samuel Dunbar made this point in his 1776 sermon, *A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ*. 'We must all engage in this War & act our part well, whether old or young, Male or Female', he declared, 'or else we shall lose our souls, lose H[onou]r, & perish for ever in Hell'.[127] The war, he thought, was truly between God and the Devil. Dunbar was hardly alone in these thoughts. In fact, the association between "Americanness" and godliness, which emerged in the imperial crisis and continued in the early war period, only strengthened as the conflict progressed. In Virginia, Robert Honyman reported in his diary that dissenting preachers were being encouraged by the Governor Patrick Henry to 'denounce those who will not go out to help the Lord against the mighty.'[128] The fervour of these sermons only increased as the war progressed. When the 'horrors of war' cause people 'to barter their invaluable rights away', one Massachusetts preacher declared in 1779, 'the christian patriot girds on the buckler…grasps the sword…and thus calm and determined he enters the field and makes the last appeal to heaven.'[129] These entreaties became all the more important as war-weariness set in amongst Virginia's populace and "monopolists," as some merchants were called, were accused by Richard Henry Lee and others of war profiteering.[130] In a 1781 sermon titled the "Wrath of God," a Virginian preacher acknowledged that there 'are men, who seem fascinated by vice & so hardened by it as if their heart were – in St. Paul's words – seared with a red hot iron.'[131] This preacher used the examples of Sodom and Gomorrah, two biblical cities whose decadence was punished by fire and brimstone, as examples of the fate that awaited those Virginians who refused to show unity as "Americans."

The Origins of the Terms "American Revolution" and "Americanism"

Britain had their own "Glorious Revolution," and the partisans decided that, in order to further solidify the bonds of belonging between the thirteen states, they needed a name for their cause. They chose the epithet "American Revolution." Having defeated a British invasion at Sullivan's Island on 28 June 1776, and repelled the Cherokee nation from their borders, the South Carolina politician William Henry Drayton was the first person to use "American

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[127] Samuel Dunbar, *A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ*, 18 June 1776, in Schoff Revolutionary War Collection (Clements Library, Ann Arbor).
[128] 4 March 1777, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), p. 116.
[129] John Murray, *Nehemiah, or The struggle for liberty never in vain, when managed with virtue and perseverance* (Newbury, 1779), pp. 35-36.
[130] Richard Henry Lee to George Mason, 9 June 1779, in Ballagh, ed., *Richard Henry Lee*, vol. 2, p. 65.
[131] 'N.D. Sermon: "The Wrath of God" [Romans I: 18]', January 1781, in Mann Page, Jr., Papers (Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, MS 31.8).

Revolution" in print.[132] Justin Du Rivage argues that that the partisans never repudiated empire, but scholars have not discussed how the phrase "American Revolution" legitimated the new nation, an independent empire free of foreign interference.[133] Printed throughout the United States on 15 October 1776, Drayton's *Charge on the Rise of the American Empire* argued that a divinely ordained revolution had created a union of thirteen states. 'CAROLINIANS!', he pronounced, 'heretofore you were bound – by the American Revolution you are now free.'[134] Many British officials had labelled the cause as an "unnatural rebellion." Drayton thought otherwise. Like the Glorious Revolution of 1688, he declared, the "American Revolution" was not 'premeditated by Man'.[135] Instead, he wrote, America's '*natural Rise* to Empire was *conducted* by THE HAND OF GOD!'[136] In this same document, he also addressed the British and Cherokees directly, warning them that America was 'Strong in her Union, on each Coast and Frontier', and prepared to meet 'the Invaders, whether British or Indian Savages, repelling their allied Attacks.'[137] In his other writings, Drayton had advocated the elimination of native peoples, the enslavement of the survivors, and the distribution of their lands to colonists.[138] Thomas Jefferson was also interested in the republic becoming an expansive empire.[139] Writing to general George Rogers Clark in 1780, he predicted "Americans" would act as 'a barrier against the dangerous extension of the British Province of Canada and add to the Empire of liberty an extensive and fertile Country thereby converting dangerous Enemies into valuable Friends.'[140] The name "American Revolution," Drayton and Jefferson hoped, would inspire "Americans" to join together in a national union that could be contrasted with the empires of despotism in Europe.

After inventing the term "American Revolution," the partisans spread this epithet through the newspapers. Three years after Drayton's *Charge*, the New York congressman Gouverneur Morris used the phrase "American Revolution" for the first time in an official

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[132] Armitage, *Civil Wars*, pp. 156-157.

[133] Du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire*. The link between "Revolution" and empire is also not explored in Edward Larkin, *The American School of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and A. G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). The intertwined nature of independence and empire for the partisans is explored in Jeremy Adelman, 'An Age of Imperial Revolutions', *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (April 2008), pp. 319-340.

[134] William Henry Drayton, *A Charge on the Rise of the American Empire* (Charleston, 1776), pp. 1-2.

[135] *Ibid*., p. 9.

[136] *Ibid*., p. 27.

[137] *Ibid*., p. 16.

[138] Keith Krawczynski, *William Henry Drayton: South Carolina Revolutionary Patriot* (Baton Rouge, 2001), p. 231.

[139] Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), p. 53.

[140] Thomas Jefferson to George Rogers Clark, December 25, 1780, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*. vol. 4 pp. 237-238.

congressional document. This pamphlet was even more significant than Drayton's *Charge*. Printed over 1,300 times and written for the Continental Congress in the shadow of the Carlisle Commission, Morris wrote the *Observations* to inspire others to follow America's just war against Great Britain.[141] The *Observations*' form as an edited collection reflected that document's function as a tool of legitimacy. It contained a collection of speeches, letters, and congressional and parliamentary acts, and in design the pamphlet was like a legal brief against Britain. It began: 'The efforts of Great-Britain to reduce these United States being now almost brought to a period; it is proper that the citizens of America should look over the ground they have trodden.'[142] Following this introduction, the document declared that 'the contest which hath emancipated our country, originated with our enemies, and hath been by them urged on for the purposes of domination: while on our part every step hath been taken consistent with possible safety to deprecate their vengeance and avert the calamities of war.'[143] The "rebellion," Congress argued, was a just war. In an attempt to strengthen their claims against Britain, the Congress denounced the British army and the 'savage tribes' and 'herd[s] of slaves' who had apparently endeavoured 'to plunge an assassin's dagger in the bosom of domestic security.'[144] The partisans' 'asylum to mankind', housed in 'the temple we have raised to freedom', the congressmen declared, will be extended throughout the world.[145] Echoing Drayton and Jefferson, the pamphlet concluded that the 'late revolution' had released the United States from the 'iron shackles of despotism' in order to spread freedom and commerce to the world.[146]

With "American Army," "Americans," and "American Revolution" all being used to highlight America's distinctive qualities with respect to Britain, the partisans also distinguished the way "Americans" spoke from their British counterparts.[147] This was an escalation of sentiments, seen in the crisis, where the partisans declared that only meritorious inhabitants spoke like an "American." Thomas Paine supported America's linguistic separation from

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[141] Ilan Rachum, 'From "American Independence" to the "American Revolution"', *Journal of American Studies* 27, no. 1 (April 1993), pp. 76-77. For a closer study of the term "revolution" through history, see *idem., "Revolution": The Entrance of a New Word into Western Political Discourse* (New York and Oxford: University Press of America, 1999); Vernon F. Snow, 'The Concept of Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England', *Historical Journal* 5, no. 2 (June 1962), pp. 167-174; and Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein eds., *Scripting Revolutions: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[142] Gouverneur Morris, *Observations on the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1779), p. 1.

[143] *Ibid*.

[144] *Ibid*., p. 28.

[145] *Ibid*., p. 122.

[146] *Ibid*.

[147] 29 November 1777, in Diary of Honyman (microfilm, LVA, Richmond, 28855), p. 187.

Britain. Anyone who declared '*himself a subject*', Paine argued in April 1777, was in the '*American sense of the word*, A TORY.'[148] As an Englishmen, Paine was acutely aware that the partisans were merely borrowing the language of past political struggles, such as the Glorious Revolution, to solve present issues. This strategy would not work, he believed, in a nation trying to express its independence. John Witherspoon, the President of the College of New Jersey (where James Madison was educated), was another supporter of this linguistic movement. A native-born Scot, he was perhaps the first person to use the term "Americanism." In 1781, Witherspoon defined 'Americanisms' as 'ways of speaking peculiar to this country.'[149] However, unlike British English, he noted that people, whatever their 'rank and education', used these terms or phrases.[150] Comparing these words to Scotticisms, he argued that the terms people used in the United States 'are of American and not of English growth.'[151] But, whilst he considered the Scottish language to be full of 'provincial barbarism[s]' due to political and cultural dependence on England, he thought the reverse was true in America.[152] Due to its 'being entirely separated from Britain', he continued, 'we shall…not be subject to the inhabitants of that island, either in receiving new ways of speaking or rejecting the old.'[153] His first example of such an enlightened "Americanism" was the name "United States." The title of the new nation, Witherspoon declared, was 'not English.'[154] 'The United States', he continued, 'are thirteen in number, but in English *either* does not signify one of many, but *one or the other* of two.'[155] Historians rarely center the efforts of Witherspoon and Paine to devise a shared language amongst "Americans."[156] Yet these efforts were part of a larger attempt to separate dependent Britons from independent and trustworthy "Americans."

Marginalised Peoples appeal as "Americans"

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[148] Paine, *The American Crisis: Number 3*, 19 April 1777, in Foner, ed., *Paine*, p. 119.
[149] The Druid, Number V, in John Rodgers, ed., *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, D. D. L. L. D. Late President of the College at Princeton, New-Jersey*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia, 1801), p. 182.
[150] *Ibid*.
[151] *Ibid*.
[152] *Ibid*., p. 183.
[153] *Ibid*.
[154] *Ibid*.
[155] *Ibid*.
[156] For an example of early Americanists who have examined the origins of "Americanism," see John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, 'England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and American', *William and Mary Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (April 1954), p. 211. Historians of language have been more diligent in exploring this change. See Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall, 'Americanisms', in John Algeo, ed., *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume 6: English in North America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 185-186.

Similar to "citizen," the attempts of Witherspoon and other white partisans to prove their distinctiveness as "Americans" was also challenged. Some appropriated the latter label. There is evidence that some native peoples claimed their status as the trueborn "Americans" on the continent. Indian peoples, though, did not refer to themselves as "Native Americans." During the war, that term was often used in the same breath as a derogatory statement about Native peoples, and their societal structures and behaviour. Writing on Indian peoples' propensity to side with Britain, the British General James Murray boasted in September 1777 that '[t]he native American is an effeminate Thing, very unfit for, & very impatient of war…everyone of them are praying for peace, & will be happy to be liberated from the oppression of the ["American"] usurpers.'[157] The Maliseet people of the Wabanaki Confederacy, who inhabited the lands on the Saint John's River near Maine, and who supported the partisans, had a message for Murray and his British brethren. This message may have been held in other parts of Indian country too. 'You know that we are Americans', they declared to the British commanding officer in August 1778, 'that this is our Native Country – you know the King of England with his evil Counsellors has been trying to take away the Lands and Liberties of our Country'.[158] These Wabanaki declared that the 'Americans is our friends, our Brothers and Countrymen, what they do, we do, what they say, we say, for we are all one and the same family.'[159] If the British troops refused to leave, and were subsequently killed, 'it is not our fault', the speaker continued, 'for we give you warning time enough to escape. Adieu forever.'[160] These Indians were not the dupes of America. This statement may have also been a show of assertiveness at the partisans' belief that they were the true "Americans." As explained in the introduction to this chapter, claims of nationhood and peoplehood, such as "Briton" and "American," were also assertions of land rights and sovereignty.[161]

Like the Wabanaki, African-descended peoples also claimed their status as rightful "Americans" in order to prove that they were worthy of inclusion in the United States. Two sermonisers believed they spoke for the five thousand black men, including more than five hundred enslaved and free African-descended Virginians, who had served with the Continental Army, in the militias, and on-board the privateers that Britain so despised.[162] These five

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[157] James Murray to George Germain, 6 September 1777, in George Germain Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 6.
[158] To the British Commanding Officer at the Mouth of the River Saint John's, 11 August 1778, *Ibid*., Volume 8.
[159] *Ibid*.
[160] *Ibid*.
[161] Barr, 'Geographies of Power', p. 9.
[162] Van Buskirk, *Standing in their Own Light*, p. 3 ("five thousand"); Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680- 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 419 ("more than five hundred").

thousand soldiers and sailors had demonstrated their "American" loyalties against Britain. They did not follow the twenty thousand black persons in the southern states who, inspired by promises of freedom, ran away from elites – including Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington – to act as servants, labourers, and engineers in the British army.[163] In a sermon published before the climactic Battle of Yorktown, Virginia, in October 1781, a "Black Whig" exalted his 'brother American'.[164] 'America!', he exclaimed, 'a name which I hope will be remembered while the sun and moon endure: An empire which…will be one of the greatest in the world!'[165] Soon after the British general Charles Cornwallis's defeat at Yorktown, an "African American" argued that Britain had failed to defeat his 'beloved countrymen'.[166] This writer, the first person recognised to use the term "African American" in print, is never discussed in the historiography.[167] It remains significant, though, that the first use of this hyphenated identity was in support of the "American" cause. This black man not only believed that he merited the title "American," but he was also willing to highlight his status as an "African." He possibly did this because he wanted to distinguish himself, and America's black followers, from the black supporters of Britain, especially those servicemen who were captured or died at Yorktown.[168] 'Ye who are my brethren', he remonstrated, 'my kinsmen according to the flesh; ye descendants of Africa – Tell me…have you not been disappointed?'[169] It is difficult to verify the identities of these writers. But both sermonisers identified as "Americans" to gain inclusion in a cause that claimed to represent the interests of mankind.

Virginian women expanded the "American" cause to include all womankind as well. They argued that they were worthy of being known as "Americans" and being treated as equals. The widow Mary Willing Byrd was one of those women. After her husband William Byrd III's suicide, she had restored the family's property at Westover and remained neutral throughout the conflict.[170] Yet this neutrality could not be sustained indefinitely. Byrd was Benedict Arnold's cousin, and after the infamous traitor to the partisan cause landed at Westover, with one thousand British and loyal disaffected troops, the nature of her allegiances became suspect. In February 1781, her correspondence was seized, and a court date of 18 March was set on

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163 Pybus, 'Jefferson's Faulty Math', p. 261.
164 "Black Whig," *A Sermon on the Present Situation of the Affairs of America and Great Britain. Written by a Black* (Philadelphia, 1781), p. 8.
165 *Ibid*.
166 "African American," *A Sermon on the Capture of Lord Cornwallis* (Philadelphia, 1782), p. 8.
167 See, for example, Daniel R. Mandell '"A Natural & Unalienable Right": New England Revolutionary Petitions and African American Identity', in Brundage et al, eds., *Remembering the Revolution*, pp. 41-57.
168 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 475-477.
169 "African American," *A Sermon*, p. 11.
170 Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, p. 226.

charges of aiding and abetting the enemy.[171] She turned to Thomas Jefferson, who had succeeded Patrick Henry as governor, for support. 'Indeed, sir', she pleaded on 23 February, 'you may rely on my veracity when I assure you that no action of my life has been inconsistent with the character of a virtuous American.'[172] Her appeal to 'character' could be contrasted with the actions of Jefferson himself, who had fled Arnold's men around Richmond for the safety of his second plantation (after Monticello), Poplar Forest.[173] The next passage of the letter was even more striking. She rejected the notion that her allegiances and political ideals were tied to those of her cousin – a radical move in a society where women's political ties were intertwined with kinship.[174] 'What am I', she declared, 'but an American? All my friends and connexions are in America; my whole property is here – could I wish ill to everything I have an interest in?'[175] Finally, she contrasted the '*savage* treatment' she had 'met with [by the partisans]' – a treatment that 'cannot be called *Liberty*.'[176] Her equation of "savage" with "liberty" was a stinging criticism given that the partisans had distinguished Washington and his civilised "Americans" with Britain's acts of indiscriminate warfare. The Assembly postponed and then cancelled her trial. Together with this legal triumph, Byrd had won a symbolic victory. By using the epithet "American," Byrd proved that she, too, merited inclusion in this larger community.

Britain Responds to the "Americans"

Like "citizen," there were numerous peoples ready to appropriate this term – and, similar to "citizen," a number of Britons also exposed the contradictions in "American." Rather than a "contagion of liberty," a great number of Britons argued that the "Americans" had spread a 'contagion of treachery' to the metropole. Scholars have estimated that 207 British

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[171] See Sarah B. Bearss, 'Byrd, Mary Willing', in *idem.* et al, eds., *The Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, vol. 2 (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2001), pp. 457-459.

[172] Mary Willing Byrd to Thomas Jefferson, 23 February 1781, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 4, p. 691.

[173] *Ibid*. ('character'); Michael Kranish, *Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. xi-xii ("fled").

[174] For the relationship between allegiances and kinship, see Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, p. 70; Sara C. Chambers and Lisa Norling, 'Choosing to be a Subject: Loyalist Women in the Revolutionary Atlantic World', *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 39-62; and Linda K. Kerber, 'The Paradox of Women's Citizenship in the Early Republic: The Case of Martin vs. Massachusetts, 1805', *American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (April 1992), pp. 349-378.

[175] Byrd to Jefferson, 23 February 1781, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 4, p. 691.

[176] *Ibid*., p. 692.

parliamentarians maintained some level of support for the "American" cause.[177] Nicholas Cresswell saw this level of support when he arrived back in London. Having been forced to leave Virginia because of his disaffection, Cresswell sailed into London on 29 August 1777. It was not a happy homecoming. He was almost broke.[178] Moreover, after spending an evening with two companions, he exclaimed that 'half the People in this bustling place are Rebels in their Hearts.'[179] Responding to these internal enemies, the supporters of the conflict, like Cresswell, increasingly labelled their domestic opponents as "Americans." The extent to which "American" became synonymous with a supporter of "rebellion" is difficult to track. But, more than six months after Cresswell docked in London, the Liverpool shipping merchant Charles Goore reported that, out of 'two Members of Parliament', 'One is a zealous American [and] the other voted in opposition to the Hessian troops being sent thither'.[180] These charges of alleged treachery flew in the House of Commons with such alacrity that the record of Parliament noted it was 'impossible to do any parliamentary business.'[181] Some opponents of the war were, in a mocking reflection of the partisan's "rough music," even tarred and feathered.[182] But Edmund Burke, in the parliamentary elections of September 1780, was able to use his enemies' rhetorical weapons against them in order to defend his support for free trade with Ireland and peace with the United States. 'I was an Irishman in the Irish business', he beseeched his Bristol constituents, 'just as much as I was an American, when on the same principles'.[183] For all his eloquence, however, the war was not a moment for independent politicians. Burke's protestations fell on deaf ears. The voters failed to return him to Westminster at the election.[184]

Beyond fomenting fears of internal "American" enemies, supporters of the government, such as Charles Goore, played upon widely held fears that the "Americans" had grander ambitions than defeating Britain and becoming an independent nation. They argued that their partisan enemies, both foreign and domestic, were intent on seizing Britain's "American empire." These British fears of an "American Empire" are rarely taken seriously in the

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[177] H. T. Dickinson, '"The Friends of America": British Sympathy with the American Revolution', in Michael T. Davis, ed., *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain, 1775-1848: Essays in Honour of Malcolm I. Thomis* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 4.
[178] 'Introduction', in Gill, Jr., and Curtis III, eds., *A Man Apart*, p. xxvi.
[179] 29 August 1777, in *Ibid*, p. 192.
[180] Charles Goore to Nathaniel Tucker, 12 March 1778, in Charles Goore Letterbook, 1774-1783 (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), p. 121. For another example, see Henry Strachey to Jane Strachey, 25 March 1777, in Henry Strachey Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor).
[181] Cobbett, ed., *Parliamentary History*, vol. 22, p. 743.
[182] Colley, *Britons*, p. 143.
[183] Speech at Bristol Previous to the Election, September 6, 1780, in Langford, ed., *Edmund Burke*, vol. 3, p. 632.
[184] Bourke, *Empire & Revolution*, p. 370.

scholarship.[185] But Benjamin Franklin's original proposal for a confederacy of the British colonies, to be named the "United Colonies of North America," was intended to remain open to all English-speaking peoples of the Atlantic world, including Canada and Jamaica.[186] The possibility of losing the latter colony, which had a population of two-hundred-thousand enslaved persons, was especially worrying to the British authorities.[187] Should America succeed in the war, George III wrote to Lord North in June 1779, 'the West Indies must follow them, not independence, but must for its own interest be dependent on North America. Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be a separate state…shoals of manufacturers would leave this country [England] for the new empire.'[188] The 'sensible, one great line to follow', the king continued, must be to 'annihilate this empire, and with firmness to make every effort to deserve success.'[189] The king, who was a strong supporter of the conflict, was not alone in these thoughts.[190] One anonymous official worried that Congress would invade the Caribbean and target that region's plantation economy. The "Americans" '[will make] descents on our W Indian Islands', he wrote after 1778, 'as an Enemys Country, carrying off the Slaves and destroying the Sugar works of the Plantations.'[191] Some even believed that America would not stop at the Caribbean. Although France and Spain were 'blind' to America's ambitions, another observer noted that the partisans saw 'Africa, Asia, the West Indies, and South America, as their right and proper domain.'[192] In Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), Rome succumbed to the invading barbarians only after they had lost their civic virtue.[193] The first volume of this history, published in 1776, was timely. With a fractious Parliament, anti-Catholic riots occurring throughout London in 1780, and thirteen colonies in "rebellion," the fate of the Roman Empire – decline and fall – appeared to be the fate of Great Britain as well.

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[185] For the United States and empire, see Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth*, ch. 4; and *idem.*, 'Independence and Interdependence: The American Revolution and the Problem of Postcolonial Nationhood, circa 1802', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (October 2017), pp. 729-750.

[186] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c. 1500-c. 1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 197.

[187] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 15.

[188] George III to Lord North, 11 June 1779, in William Bodham Donne, ed., *The Correspondence of King George the Third with Lord North From 1768 to 1783*, vol. 2 (London, 1867), p. 254.

[189] *Ibid*.

[190] O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, p. 35.

[191] *Thoughts on the War between Great Britain & America, 1776-1778* (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), p. 85.

[192] *Hints for the management of the impending war with France and Spain*, 2 March 1778, in George Germain Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 7.

[193] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarianism and Religion, Volume One: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 303.

Despite these attacks on a fledgling "American Empire," the conflict's opponents in Britain had more positive terms for the partisans' "American" cause. Whilst William Drayton, in October 1776, may have been the first person in America to use the term "American Revolution," the first usage of that phrase in Britain was months earlier. Though unnoticed in the scholarship, one correspondent to the Archbishop of Canterbury used this epithet in the February 1776 edition of a British newspaper. His letter to the Archbishop attacked the notion that this was an 'American revolt'.[194] Instead, he noted, 'in future times' the event 'may be distinguished as an epocha in the sacred cause of liberty, and commonly called the American Revolution'.[195] Given that Congress eventually issued a whole pamphlet dedicated to the "American Revolution," this Briton was correct in assuming that it would become "commonly called" by this term, especially after the war's conclusion.

Moreover, Figure 25 shows an expansion in usage of "American War," but some Britons' use of that term was inflected with support for the partisan cause. The sense of futility at Britons fighting their former subjects was palpable in the newspapers. The public papers regularly carried dispatches from Parliament, as politicians who were opposed to the "American War" rose to declare its futility. In an interesting twist on comments made about "unnatural rebellions" in the previous chapter, the parliamentarian Sir Edward Newnham commented in December 1777 that he would be prepared to raise one hundred thousand pounds sterling in credit, but he was unwilling to spend 'a guinea' on the 'unnatural American war'.[196] That same month in the House of Lords, Lord Abingdon, who opposed the laws suspending habeas corpus, reportedly condemned 'in very severe terms the…conduct of the American war, and defending that of those who had been *nick-named Rebels*.'[197] Abingdon's notion, that Britain was corrupting its ideals in pursuit of a destructive war, was widely shared in the newspapers. Reporting on the partisans' victory at Saratoga, the *London Evening Post* compared the 'moderation shewn by the Americans', who allowed Burgoyne's six-thousand captured troops the honours of war, with those of the British, who 'like Howe, when at Long Island, put the vanquished to the bayonet'.[198] Rather than victory and merit, these writers and politicians argued that this war over posts had only brought the British Empire further dishonor.

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[194] *London Evening Post*, 24 February 1776.
[195] *Ibid*.
[196] Proceedings in the House of Commons, *London Chronicle*, 9-11 December 1777.
[197] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 12 December 1777.
[198] *London Evening Post*, 15 December 1777.

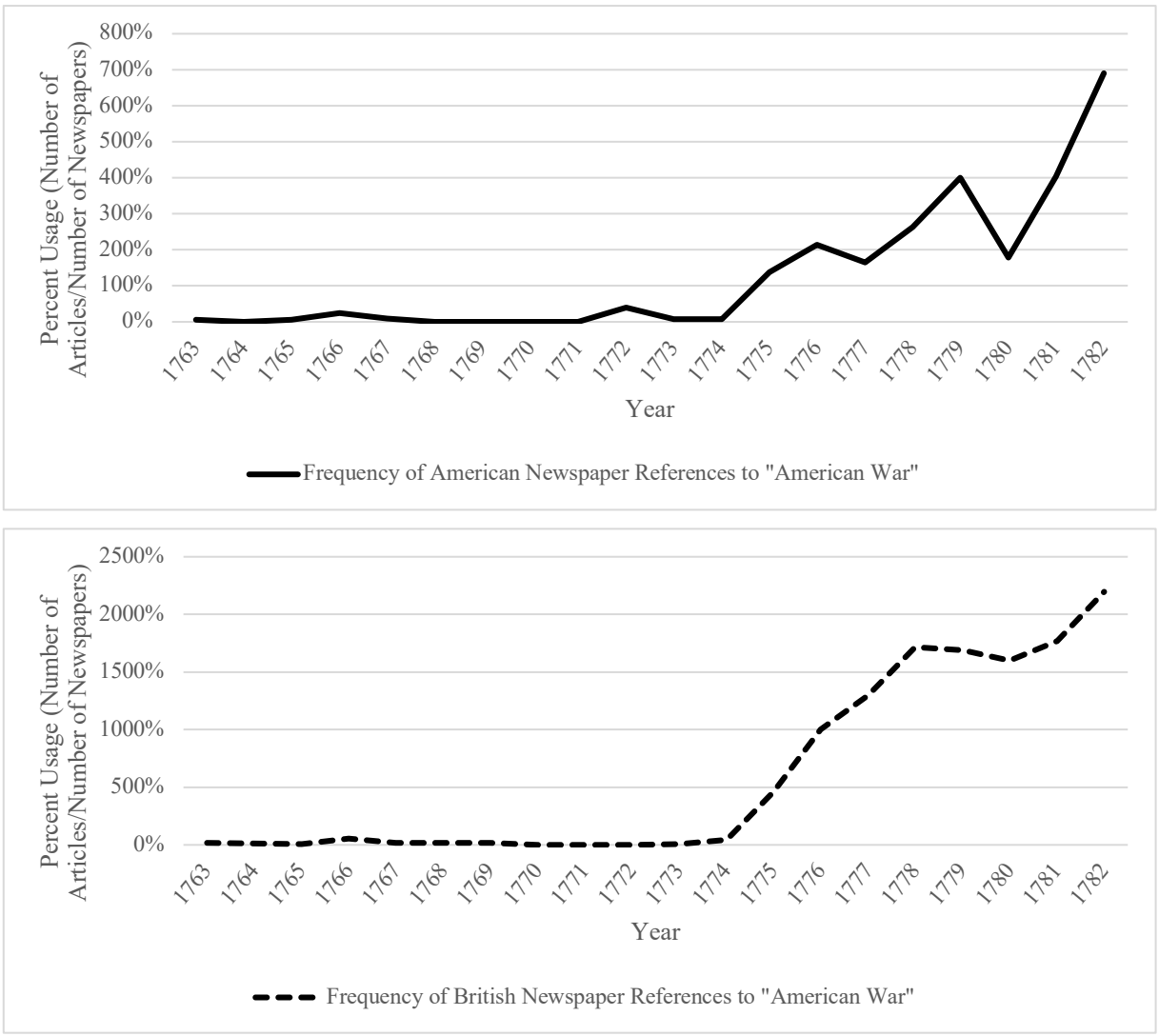

Figure 25: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "American War," 1763-82.

In contrast to these views, Britons more supportive of the "American War" sometimes preferred not to use that term at all. Building on their case that America wanted to establish its own empire, some argued that the war was not a contest over posts. It was a war for the survival of Britain itself. 'Still, still, the nation [Britain] seems not to have got a true Idea of the Contest', Boucher wrote in a December 1777 letter to a friend, 'it is not otherwise an American War than as the scene of action happens to lie there.'[199] 'It is, plainly & truly, a War against the Constitution', he continued, 'a Catalina war Combination of individual scoundrels. Some of the best Heads &, certainly, the best Hands employed in it, are not of American Growth: two thirds of Washington[']s army were born in this Hemisphere.'[200] Boucher transformed the

[199] Jonathan Boucher to John James, 23 December 1777, in Boucher Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, Mss 93 B66), Box 1, Folder 9.
[200] *Ibid*.

"Americans" from a virtuous force into deceitful foreigners, with neither family ties nor allegiances to North America. His mention of a 'Catalina war' was also significant. The "Catalina" in his letter was Catalina de Erauso: a cross-dressing, bisexual, former nun responsible for murdering her brother, Miguel, in a duel and waging a cruel war against Chile's indigenous population.[201] Similar thoughts were aired in a parliamentary debate in 1781. Boucher would not have disagreed with one 'noble lord' who declared that the '[partisans] tear with their hands the bonds of constitutional union', and have entered into 'alliance with the most dangerous and inveterate [French] enemies of the state'.[202] The lord instead determined that the conflict was a 'holy war.'[203] The former Governor of Jamaica, William Lyttelton, opposed this view. He attacked the war's longevity and futility.[204] 'Like the holy wars carried on in Palestine [in the Crusades]', he asserted, 'it was conceived in injustice…and has ruined and depopulated the country which had engaged in it.'[205] Should the government want to blame the former colonists for the fall of the British Empire, he implied, they need only look at their depredations in the colonies, which had allowed the partisans to try and building a sense of belonging between thirteen disparate states, united by one common trait: that they were "Americans."

Long Knife and Virginian

The Violent Origins of "Long Knife"

Still, native peoples had a more powerful critique of the partisans than calling them "rebels," "pirates," or Catalina's soldiers. The Lenape and Shawnee nations, in particular, argued that the colonists were the same "Virginians" and "Long Knives" who had invaded their lands and hunting grounds and killed their women and children without remorse. Richard White has discussed "Long Knife" or "Big Knife" and its conflation with "Americans." He notes that, similar to the partisans' normalisation of "savage," many indigenous nations thought that the Virginians were born killers.[206] White does not acknowledge, however, that this episode was part of wider wartime story of name-calling. Though native peoples often defined themselves

[201] Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).
[202] Cobbett, ed., *Parliamentary History*, vol. 22, p. 447.
[203] *Ibid*.
[204] *Ibid*.
[205] *Ibid*., p. 453.
[206] White, *Middle Ground*, p. 394.

as outside or against the United States, that does not mean they did not have an opinion on that new nation and the imperial impulse fundamental to the epithet "American Revolution."[207] The term "Long Knife," which arose to deal with the partisans' national creation, had a long history. It supposedly originated from a treaty made between the Colony of Virginia and the Mohawk nation at Albany, New York, in 1684. Francis Howard, Lord Effingham, was the first governor of Virginia to meet with the Haudenosaunee chiefs. On being introduced to them, the story goes that the name "Howard" was misinterpreted as "Hower," which to the Mohawk evidently sounded like *assarakowa*, or "Big Knife," or "Long Knife."[208] From then on, Virginians, who were addressed as "Assarigoa," were brothers to the Haudenosaunee. This narrative, which has received much attention, is open to doubt.[209] European colonists were notorious for misunderstanding treaty meetings, particularly the idioms and metaphors that native peoples used to communicate their grievances.

When placed in a wider context, the term "Long Knife" may have been related to other terms that indicated the colonists' violence and treachery. For instance, the founder of Rhode Island colony, Roger Williams, made an early reference to this phrase in his seminal study of the Narragansett language, *A Key into the Language of America* (1643). He mentioned that the Massachusetts colonists, who were also renowned for violence, were known as 'chauquaqock': 'Englishmen, *properly* sword-men.[210] The epithet "Long Knife," therefore, seems to have had similar connotations. Indeed, Barbara Alice Mann claims that some indigenous peoples associated "Long Knife" with the bayonets that the colonists used when charging into battle.[211] Regions and countries are usually distinctive for their rituals, language, and political systems. But the 'white Savage Virginians', as some members of the Shawnee and Mohawk nations referred to the colonists, became distinctive among many native peoples for their long history of violence.[212]

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[207] Alan Taylor, 'Expand or Die: The Revolution's New Empire', *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (October 2017), pp. 619-632.

[208] Matthew L. Rhoades, *Long Knives and the Longhouse: Anglo-Iroquois Politics and the Expansion of Colonial Virginia* (Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), p. 30.

[209] See Daniel K. Richter, *Trade, Land, Power: The Struggle for Eastern North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 293, n. 3; and Timothy J. Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York: Penguin, 2008), pp. 75-76. Interestingly, Richter notes that Euro-Americans are still known today by some Great Lakes peoples as "Virginians."

[210] Roger Williams*, A Key into the Language of America*, ed. by Howard Chapin (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1936 [1643]), p. 59. Similar terms, like "cutthroats," were mentioned in Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (London, 1637), p. 112; and Edward Winslow, *Good News from New England* (London, 1624) in Jack Dempsey, ed., *Good News from New England and Other Writings on the Killings at Weymouth Colony* (Scituate, MA: Digital Scanning Inc., 2001), p. 115.

[211] Barbara Alice Mann, *George Washington's War on Native America* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), p. 56.

[212] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 278.

The Partisans and their Allies are Labelled as "Long Knives"

The violent connotations of "Virginian" and "Long Knife" gave these terms more significance when Indian peoples used them against their enemies, whether European-descended peoples or other indigenous nations. The Ohio river valley descended into intermittent conflict as Indian nations, particularly the Cherokee and Haudenosaunee, split over whether to support to partisans or the British.[213] The war never turned into an outright civil war between Indian peoples – as it had done between whites in southeastern Virginia – because the anger that many showed was reflected on to the colonisers.[214] But those Indians who sided with the "Long Knife" regularly suffered the same insults as their partisan allies. The Chickamauga seceded from the Cherokees at the end of 1776 because of tensions over whether the Cherokee should side with Britain or the colonists. Dragging Canoe and his younger followers made their choice. Calling themselves '*Anti-Yunwiya*', or 'the Real People', they broke with the older leadership, who advocated peace with the United States.[215] For their attempts at peace with Virginia, Dragging Canoe condemned them as 'Virginians'.[216] The neutral Lenape were also attacked by the Miami, Mingo, and Wyandot as "Virginians."[217] Choosing not to take a side in this war, then, was still considered to be a choice. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the Lenape were known as a 'nation of women', a positive phrase that arose because of their important role in maintaining order between different nations.[218] Wartime tensions, however, changed the meaning of the term "women". The Lenape were now mocked as "womanly" cowards.[219] They had been asked to send men to join the "American" forces, but one Lenape declared: 'I am so much mocked at by the Enemy Indians for speaking so long to them for You. Now they laugh at me, and ask where that great Army of my Brothers, that was to come out

[213] Calloway, *Indian country*, p. 26.
[214] Colin Calloway argues that we should see the conflict in Indian country as a civil war, but Karim Trio notes that the conflict was more limited. *Ibid*., p. 26; Karim M. Tiro, 'A "Civil" War? Rethinking Iroquois Participation in the American Revolution', *Explorations in Early American Culture* 4 (2000), pp. 148-165; and *idem*., *The People of the Standing Stone: The Oneida Nation from the Revolution through the Era of Removal* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), pp. 40-49. This study agrees with Tiro's approach to Indian conflict.
[215] Calloway, *Indian country*, p. 26.
[216] *Ibid*.
[217] Griffin, *American Leviathan*, p. 130.
[218] Fur, *A Nation of Women*, p. 171.
[219] *Ibid*., p. 197.

against them so long ago, and so often, stays so long.'[220] By using the term "Brothers," the 'Enemy Indians' indicated that the Lenape were dependent on Virginia.[221] The 'Enemy', the speaker continued, 'is continually threatening me, calling me big Knife and saying they will serve me the same.'[222] Native peoples who were called "Big Knife" reflected a case of guilt by their association with the Virginians.

The British governor of Detroit, Henry Hamilton, associated "Americans" with the "Virginians" in order to convince the Shawnee, Lenape, and Miami nations to subdue the partisans. The Indian agent of the Continent Congress, Richard Butler, in late 1775 complained that 'the Com[man]d[an]t of Detroit makes the Indians believe that the Whole of the Colonies Are to be Considered As Virginians Since the Union of the Congress made them One *People*'.[223] Hamilton's attempt to convince these three nations that all "Americans" were "Virginians" was initially unsuccessful. Few were willing to listen to the British so soon after Dunmore's war against the Ohio Confederacy in 1774. Still recovering from the conflict and its onerous peace terms, this Confederacy berated the Irish fur trader George Croghan that 'Ever since those darke clouds appeared over our Country you always told us to be strong'.[224] But, rather than Britain sending 'Warriors', they argued, 'none are as yet come, and the big knife people has murdered several of our people, since those Troubles began'.[225] These sentiments had not improved after three years of interactions and, in November 1778, on meeting with inhabitants of the Eel River, allied to the Miami, Hamilton faced more intransigence. Though they were 'pleased to see us on our march against the rebels [at Fort Vincennes]', the speaker declared 'that he was a man who loved his wife and children'.[226] This speaker knew the levels of violence that Virginians regularly brought to bear in their military campaigns against Indian peoples. Hamilton had more success in his negotiations with another group of Miami, who showed their anger against the "Long Knives." (The Miami were divided:

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[220] Delaware chiefs to Daniel Brodhead and Captain Killbuck, 23 April 1780, in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, ed., *Frontier Retreat on the Upper Ohio, 1779-1781* (Madison Wisconsin Historical Society, 1917), p. 172.

[221] Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, p. 48.

[222] Delaware chiefs to Brodhead and Killbuck, 23 April 1780, in Thwaites and Kellogg, ed., *Frontier Retreat*, p. 173.

[223] 6 September 1775, in Edward G. Williams, ed., 'The Journal of Richard Butler, 1775: Continental Congress' Envoy to the Western Indians: Second Installment', *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 47, no. 2 (April 1964), p. 33.

[224] Ohio Confederacy of Indians to George Croghan, 1775, in Henry Clinton Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor), Volume 12.

[225] *Ibid*.

[226] 19 November 1778, in John D. Barnhart, ed., *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution with The Unpublished Journal of Lieut. Gov. Henry Hamilton* (Crawfordsville, IN: R.E. Banta, 1951), p. 124.

some villages of the Piankeshaw supported the partisans, whilst a group at Ouiatenon in present-day Indiana sided with the British.)[227] The Miami chiefs presented Hamilton with the head of a bear and then 'some took a bit of the head, saying 'twas the head of the Great Knife, so they stile the Virginians'.[228] This act of ritualistic violence was significant. In biting the bear's head, they may have shown their willingness to side with the British and drive the Virginians from Indian country.

With increasing frequency, the Lenape joined the Miami in referring to all "Americans" as "Long Knives." The former colonists remained the Lenape's allies, but tensions were on the rise between whites and Indian peoples. The Moravian missionaries David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder, who both preached to Lenape communities along the Muskingum River, were eyewitnesses to this change over five years.[229] Zeisberger was the first to notice a shift in the nomenclature. In June 1776, he noted in his diary that the speaker Glikkikan had told his fellow Lenape 'that the *Virginians* (because all White people are now called this here) were not planning to come [from Fort Pitt] across the *Ohio* into Indian country unless they were forced to.'[230] Two years later, John Heckewelder recognised that there had been an uptick in tensions. After he saluted the Lenape and their chief White Eyes at Fort Pitt, 'not a single person returned the compliment'.[231] This group were wary because of rumours 'that nothing short of their total destruction, had been resolved upon by the "long knives" (the Virginians, or *new* American people).'[232] The '*new* American people', it appeared, were becoming collectively known amongst the Lenape as "Long Knives." The murder of White Eyes by a group of partisan militiamen on 5 November 1778 was the last straw for much of the Lenape nation. Soon after this crime, they sided with the British. Less than three years later, Heckewelder recorded the speech of the Lenape chief Pachgantschihilas. He tried to convince the Moravian Indians (many of whom were Christians) that nothing had changed after independence. As children grow older, they usually mature, he argued, but the Virginians 'do not grow better! No! They remain the same, and will continue to be so, as long as we have any land left us!'[233] He invited them

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[227] Bert Ansom, *The Miami Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 58-94.
[228] 19 November 1778, in Barnhart, ed., *Henry Hamilton*, p. 111.
[229] Katherine Carte Engel, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 232.
[230] 20 May 1777, in Herman Wellenreuther and Carola Wessel, eds., *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger, 1772-1781* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), p. 377.
[231] John Heckewelder, *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, From Its Commencement, In the Year 1740, to the Close of the Year 1808* (Philadelphia, 1820), p. 179.
[232] *Ibid*.
[233] *Ibid*., p. 217.

to 'live in peace and safety; where no long knife shall ever molest you!'[234] The Christians refused to leave. 'Americans', they argued, were 'sprung from the same soil'.[235]

The "Long Knives" proved that these Christians were wrong to trust them. They also ensured that Indian peoples often found the violence inflicted by "Americans" to be their distinguishing characteristic apart from their whiteness. In April 1782 the colonists murdered one hundred men, women, and children at the Moravian village of Gnadenhutten in the Ohio.[236] The Lenape wanted retribution and they found an outlet for their fury in the violent death of William Crawford, George Washington's own surveyor and land speculator. The Lenape chief Captain Pipe, or Hopocan, had four years earlier joined hands with Crawford at the Treaty of Fort Pitt on 17 September 1778.[237] He had also told Henry Hamilton, who was eventually defeated by George Rogers Clark at the Siege of Fort Vincennes on 25 February 1779: 'It is your concern to fight the Long Knives; you have raised a quarrel among yourselves, and you ought yourselves to fight it out.'[238] Hopocan declared that Hamilton was asking too much for 'your children, the Indians, to expose themselves to danger for your sakes.'[239] However, the destruction of Hopocan's village in 1781 and the Gnadenhutten massacre shifted his allegiances to the British. After capturing Crawford, who was raiding villages along the Sandusky River, the Lenape took their revenge. They cut off both his ears, scorched his body with gunpowder, scalped, and immolated him in a great fire.[240] This was an act of symbolic violence, a response to the collective acts that "Long Knives" had inflicted on indigenous peoples.[241] The Seneca adoptee Simon Girty likewise pinned most of the partisans' misdeeds on the Virginians. 'Brothers', he declared five months later to an Indian council in August 1782, 'the Long Knives (the Virginians) have overrun your country and usurped your hunting grounds. They have destroyed the cane, trodden down the clover, killed the deer, and the buffalo, the beaver and the raccoon.'[242] With those words they marched on Kentucky, the seat of the "Long Knife." The year 1782 signalled the end of America's war with Great Britain but

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[234] *Ibid*., p. 219.
[235] *Ibid*.
[236] Rob Harper, 'Looking the Other Way: The Gnadenhutten Massacre and the Contextual Interpretation of Violence', *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (July 2007), p. 622.
[237] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 277.
[238] Speech of Captain Pipe, 1779, in John McIntosh, ed., *The Origin of the North American Indians* (New York, 1858), p. 273.
[239] *Ibid*.
[240] Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Indian Atrocities: Narrative of the Perils and Sufferings of Dr. Knight and John Slover* (Cincinnati, 1867), p. 22.
[241] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 278.
[242] Thomas D. Clark, ed., *The Voice of the Frontier: John Bradford's Notes on Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), p. 49.

was only another year in the continuation of conflicts between native peoples and their implacable "Virginian" foes.

The Partisans Reform "Long Knife"

The Virginian colonists knew about the indigenous peoples' conflation of "Americans" and "Long Knives." However, instead of repudiating this epithet, some Virginians reformed "Long Knife" into a term that became synonymous with a defender of the state's borders. This term does not show up in the newspapers. That omission may have been for a good reason: the partisans did not want to be associated with indiscriminate violence that complicated their image of glorious "Americans" fighting "savage" Britons. The partisans primarily used "Long Knife" to indicate their martial superiority over indigenous peoples. The partisan Daniel Boone trumpeted Virginians' military abilities. 'Now we began to strengthen, and had skirmishes with the Indians almost every day', he wrote in July 1776, 'The savages now learned the superiority of the LONG KNIFE, as they call the Virginians; being outgeneraled in almost every battle.'[243] The Virginians saw themselves as distinctive for their strength in Indian wars.

The partisan's efforts to prove their martial superiority over Indians had a gender component. The defense of hearth and home against Indian peoples remained a central part of the Virginian colonists' identity.[244] The powerful image of homes destroyed, and women and children murdered, in an Indian war helped convince Virginians to fight. One month before Boone's comments, the surveyor William Preston reported that the Shawnee had attacked the frontier. In their wake, 'Fences are thrown down & the Crops left Open to be destroyed.'[245] This same motif of home was present in a more famous incident during the war. On 25 July 1777, Jane McCrea was murdered and scalped by two Huron warriors whilst being escorted to the British general John Burgoyne's camp.[246] After he heard reports of McCrea, and rumours that Henry Hamilton had offered money for scalps, the Continental Army general Horatio Gates promised revenge. 'Miss McCrea, a young lady lovely to the sight', he decried, 'was with other women and children taken out of a house…carried into the woods, and there scalped

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[243] 25 July 1776, in William A. Galloway, ed., 'Journal of Daniel Boone', *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications*, vol. 13 (Columbus, 1904), p. 270.
[244] Sachs, *Home Rule*, p. 24.
[245] William Preston to Edmund Pendleton, 15 June 1776, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia,* vol. 7, p. 525. For more on property destruction as a motif of Indian wars, see Lepore, *Name of War*, pp. 77-79; and Silver, *Savage Neighbors*, p. 69.
[246] Parkinson, *Common Cause*, p. 340.

and mangled in the most shocking manner.'[247] Gates and other "Americans" invoked the 'peaceful' and 'happy' dwellings of the colonists in order to advocate that they be protected and white "civilisation" expanded into Indian country.[248]

The "Long Knives" used their purported martial superiority to great effect. George Washington and other generals believed that the Indians feared Virginians more 'than the Rest of the Colonies'.[249] George Rogers Clark prided himself on his ability to manipulate the enemy, both through public executions of indigenous warriors and words directed at his native enemies.[250] He later reflected in his memoirs that the only way to make war upon indigenous peoples was to 'gain a name among them.'[251] And that was precisely what occurred. His instructions were to 'overawe' the Indians and he attempted to do so in a 1779 speech to various Indian nations assembled on Hamilton's side.[252] 'Men and Warriors', it began, '[…] it is a long time since the Big Knives sent Belts of peace among You Siliciting of you not to listen to the bad talks and deceit of the English as it would at some future day tend to the Destruction of your Nations.'[253] In a show of masculine bravado, he called upon all the Indian supporters of Britain to 'come out and Revenge his Blood on the Big knives fight like Men that the Big Knives may not be ashamed when they fight you; that the old Women may not tell us that we only fought Squaws.'[254] As we saw in the first chapter, the colonists often used the word "squaws," a white slur for indigenous women, to diminish Indian people's martial abilities and stereotype their menfolk as indolent, and women as the productive classes in native societies.[255] Clark was certainly dismissive of Indians' martial abilities. Tired of negotiating, he declared that 'this is the last Speech you may expect from the Big knives, the next thing will be the Tomahawk.'[256] The choice was simple: '[those who chose war] may expect in four Moons to see Your Women & Children given to the Dogs to eat, while those Nations that have kept their words with me will Flourish…under the care and nourishment of their father the Big Knives.'[257] These comments may have been effective. Clark reported to George Mason that, a

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[247] Horatio Gates to William Digby, 2 September 1777, in Rhodehamel, ed., *Writings from the War*, pp. 315-316.
[248] *Ibid*.
[249] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 212.
[250] Selby, *Revolution*, p. 195.
[251] George Rogers Clark, *The Conquest of the Illinois*, ed. by Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1920), p. 167.
[252] Instructions to Clark from the Virginia Council, 12 December 1778, in James, ed., *Clark*, vol. 4, p. 78.
[253] Clark to George Mason, 19 November 1779, in *Ibid*., p. 148.
[254] *Ibid*.
[255] Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), ch. 2.
[256] Clark to George Mason, 19 November 1779, in James, ed., *Clark*, vol. 4, p. 149.
[257] *Ibid*.

few weeks later, indigenous peoples began to desert Hamilton.[258]

The Legacy of "Long Knife"

These native peoples reacted that way for a reason: the depredations that the "Long Knives" inflicted on Indian country during the war were a vivid communal memory for many indigenous peoples. Christine DeLucia notes that the control of space has been the main site of contestation in white-Indian encounters.[259] Yet the words used also mattered. Native peoples also used epithets to understand their past. In May 1779, George Washington had ordered General John Sullivan to march against the Six Nations and effect the 'total destruction and devastation of their settlements…to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more.'[260] The results of this campaign were devastating. By the end of Sullivan's expedition his army had destroyed forty towns and laid waste to the area's food supply.[261] Haunted by these scenes of devastation, the Seneca leader Cornplanter commented to Washington in December 1790 that 'When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you *The Town Destroyer*; and to this day, when that name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling to the necks of their mothers.'[262] The epithet "Town Destroyer" was important for two reasons. First, Indian towns were important hubs of cross-cultural relations. Destroying these urban areas, sites of kinship built and maintained by native women, may have proven to the Seneca that the Virginians had gone beyond their usual atrocities.[263] They were trying to annihilate Indians. The second reason that the epithet was important related to that term's long lineage in Washington's family. It was given to his great-grandfather, John Washington, in 1676 after he had five Susquehannock chiefs seized, bound, and murdered during a parlay.[264] Cornplanter knew what he was doing when he called George Washington by that title. The Virginian general had not just inherited this label, he had more than earnt it. The politics of epithets had come full circle. "Long Knife" and "Town Destroyer"

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[258] *Ibid*.
[259] Christine DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 3.
[260] George Washington to General John Sullivan, 31 May 1779, in Abbott et al, eds., *Washington: War Series*, vol. 20, p. 720.
[261] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 255.
[262] 'Seneca Chiefs to George Washington', 1 December 1790, *National Archives*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-07-02-0005>, accessed 4 May 2018.
[263] Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690-1792* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), pp. 129-160.
[264] Calloway, *Indian World*, p. 69.

– both invented in the seventeenth century and both used for persons who viciously betrayed Indian peoples – were resurrected and repurposed for a new century. For the Lenape, Shawnee, and other Indians, that purpose was to denigrate "Americans," who wanted the world to know of their virtues, as old and untrustworthy Virginians.

Republican

The Partisans' Reform of "Republican"

Similar to "Long Knife," the epithet "republican," which the partisans reformed into a meritorious supporter of popular sovereignty (the notion that government is based on the consent of the people), also had a complicated and violent history. Brendan McConville has shown that the United States was characterised by both a "republican" and royalist political culture.[265] But the duality he identifies between royalism and "republicanism" existed for a reason: many partisans used the label "republican" to argue against anyone who appeared loyal to the British system. There was a significant problem with the epithet "republican" though: Charles I's execution in 1649 after the English Civil War had made that term synonymous with political anarchy and religious enthusiasm.[266] As a result of these radical connotations, Figure 26 shows that the label "republican" only became popular after independence, as both a mark of distinction for the partisans and of vitriolic abuse for the British.

The growing prominence of the epithet "republican" was owed, in part, to the imperial crisis. The history of republics inspired the partisans in their cause against "taxation without representation." The protestors, as we have seen, were particularly enamoured with the Roman Republic, whose fall at the hands of Julius Caesar provided the enduring lesson that tyranny could overturn liberty at any moment.[267] Still, Rome was not the only example of a republic. The partisans also looked to contemporaneous republics, including the Dutch, Swiss, and Corsicans, who had fought wars of independence against colonial authorities. A letter in the *Boston Gazette* of 1774 gloated that the Dutch republic, which achieved its independence from

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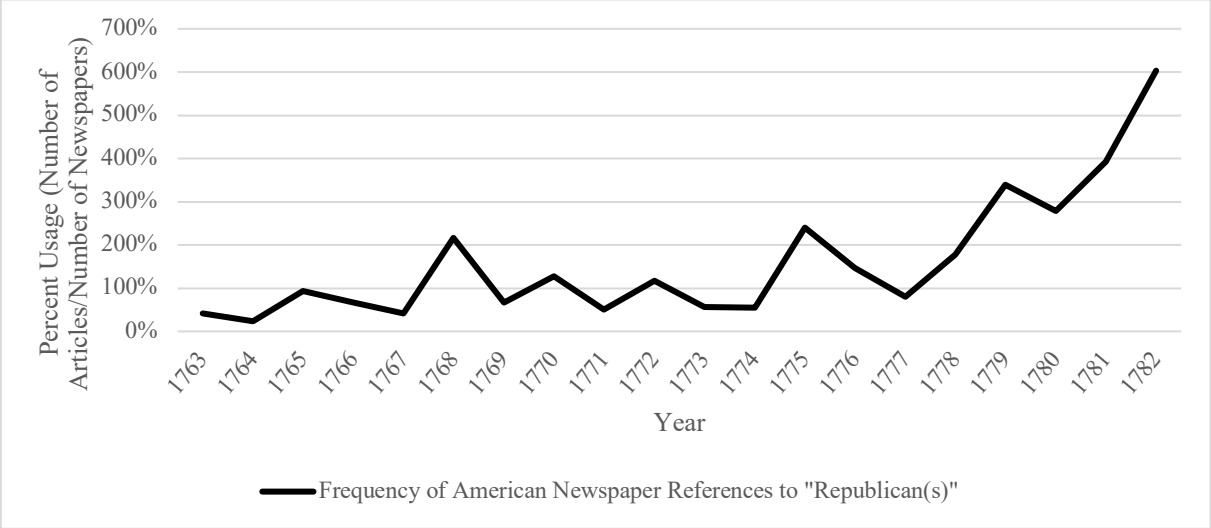
[265] McConville, *King's Three Faces*, p. 306.

[266] W. Paul Adams, 'Republicanism in Political Rhetoric Before 1776', *Political Science Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (September 1970), pp. 397-421. Surprisingly, Adams is one of the few scholars to explore how the term "republican" was used in the Revolutionary period. The scholarship on "republicanism" has largely ignored this epithet. See Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Republicanism: The Career of a Concept', *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992), pp. 11-38; and Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*.

[267] Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 8.

Spain in 1581, had 'more than once driven the British navy from the ocean'.[268] It was 'this republic of patriots', the letter-writer noted, that 'drove the tyrant [Charles II] from the [British] throne' in 1688.[269] Stories of European republics, like the Netherlands and Corsica, were published throughout America and offered the protestors examples of the consequences if they failed to protect their liberties.[270] 'I cannot conceive the necessity of becoming a slave', the Virginian politician Arthur Lee wrote in 1768 (the same year, perhaps not coincidentally, as a bump in popularity for "republican"), '[…] nor can I well imagine a greater necessity to ever exist…than that which now operates upon the Corsicans from the French.'[271] The transnational world of republics both frightened and reassured "Americans" looking to separate themselves from tyrannical British rule.



[268] *Boston Gazette*, 30 May 1774.
[269] *Ibid*.
[270] The most popular of these accounts was James Boswell, *An Account of Corsica* (London, 1768).
[271] Arthur Lee, 'Monitor No. 5', in *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 17 March 1768.

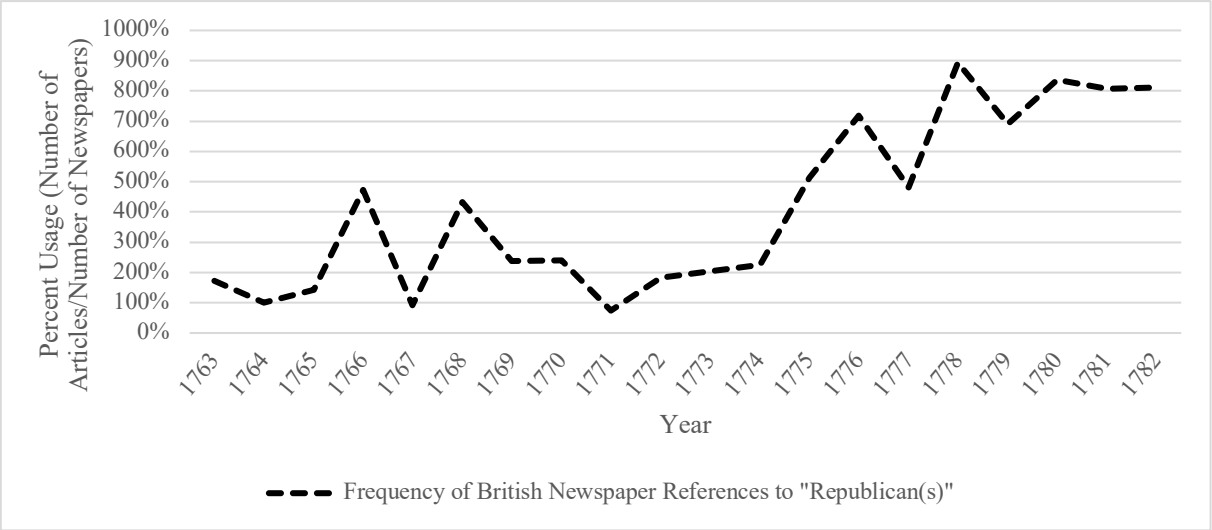


Figure 26: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Republican(s)," 1763-82.

The experiences of republics gave the partisans confidence in their cause, but Thomas Paine was integral to the reformation of "republican." Just as he had attacked the epithet "British subject," his pamphlet *Common Sense* changed the conversation surrounding the term "republican."[272] He argued that Britain's mixed constitution was all smoke and mirrors. Besides the 'new republican materials, in the persons of the commons, on whose virtue depends the freedom of England', he wrote, Britain was a monarchy in all but name.[273] The monarchy, he declared, 'hath so effectually swallowed up the power' of the Commons that England was 'nearly as monarchical as…France or Spain.'[274] Given that France was synonymous in Britain with universal monarchy, and Spain with the "black legend" of Indian genocide in South America, that insult may have struck a nerve. 'Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England than in some other countries', he noted, 'but the *will* of the king is as much the *law* of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the people under the more formidable shape of an act of parliament.'[275] This passage rebuked the idea that a limited, constitutional monarch – a "patriot king," who ensured stability – was the cornerstone of the British political and legal system.[276] In calling George III a "savage," as mentioned in the previous chapter, Paine made clear that the Georgian king was

[272] Winthrop D. Jordan, 'Familial Politics: Thomas Paine and the Killing of the King, 1776', *Journal of American History* 60, no. 2 (September 1973), pp. 294-308.
[273] Paine, *Common Sense*, 10 January 1776, in Foner, ed., *Paine*, p. 9.
[274] *Ibid*., p. 20.
[275] *Ibid*., p. 11.
[276] Bolingbroke, 'Patriot King', December 1738, in David Armitage, ed., *Bolingbroke: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 257-258. For an explication of the values that make a "patriot king," see Edward Lewis, *The Patriot King Displayed: In the Life and Reign of Henry VIII* (London, 1769).

the problem and not the solution. After attacking the British constitution, Paine rehabilitated the epithet "republican." 'Men fall out with names without understanding them', he rebutted.[277] 'For it is the republican and not the monarchical part of the constitution of England which Englishmen glory in…and it is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues.'[278] Instead of opposing "republican" governments, Paine wanted the inhabitants of the United States to acknowledge that only those politicians who sought to defend "the people's" interests were worthy of their affection.

The partisans' attacks on their royalist enemies provided them an avenue through which to prove their distinctiveness as "republicans." Paine increased his attacks against Britain's monarchical system. In response to an opponent of independence, he argued in April 1776 'that all men are Republicans by nature and Royalists only by fashion.'[279] In Virginia, these sentiments were well received. Paine's ideas about popular sovereignty and an increased manhood suffrage were also the ideals of many of the common folk.[280] The gentry farmer Landon Carter acknowledged the support for "republicanism" and popular rule in his diary. Carter lamented to Richard Henry Lee, who he wrongly assumed had written *Common Sense*, had called every opponent to independence 'a damned rascal and Sycophant, that is, a coward.'[281] He further detested the fact that 'this Independency' had been 'reduced into ever so formal a Republican show'.[282] Even Paine's political opponents challenged Britain's system of government. Published in April 1776, John Adams's *Thoughts on Government*, written in response to Paine's calls for a single-legislature government, attacked the mixed constitution as it operated in the metropole. The 'wretched condition of this country, however, for ten or fifteen years past' reminded Adams that, if happiness was to be secured in his home state of Massachusetts and elsewhere, then 'there is no good government but what is Republican.'[283] Adams advocated for a mixed-constitution republic, 'the only valuable part of the British Constitution', the 'very definition' of this political system being '"an Empire of Laws, and not of men."'[284] Popular acts against the king's symbols were as important as "republican" sentiments in diminishing the attractiveness of royalism to America's inhabitants. The king's

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277 Paine, *Common Sense*, 10 January 1776, in Foner, ed., *Paine*, p. 20.
278 *Ibid*.
279 Thomas Paine, 'The Forester's Letter III', 22 April 1776, in Foner, ed., *Paine*, p. 81.
280 McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 198.
281 29 March 1776, in Jack P. Greene, ed., *The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778*, vol. 2 (Richmond: The Virginia Historical Society, 1987 [1965]), p. 1007.
282 *Ibid*.
283 John Adams, *Thoughts on Government: applicable to the present state of the American colonies: In a letter from a gentleman to his friend* (Philadelphia, 1776), p. 7.
284 *Ibid*., pp. 7-8.

arms were removed from a statehouse in Philadelphia on 8 July 1776.[285] And one day later, a crowd descended on Bowling Green in Manhattan and dismantled a lead statue of George III.[286] In a form of iconographical regicide, the statue was melted down and caste as musket balls that would be used to drive the "King's friends" from America.

The Virginia Convention, which lasted from 6 May to 5 July 1776, displayed the extent to which "republican" had been rehabilitated. Rather than debating "republican" government, the 112 supporters of independence at the Convention argued about what kind of republic suited Virginia. One of the only sources of opposition to this plan came from the conservative Carter Braxton, who was in favour of replicating Britain's mixed constitution on America's shores. He argued that in order 'to shake off the authority of arbitrary British dictators, we ought nevertheless to adopt and perfect that system, which England has suffered to be so grossly abused, and the experience of ages has taught us to venerate.'[287] Braxton noted that, whilst "republicanism" depended on people's unlikely commitment to the common good, the British political system had balanced that nation's social distinctions and created order and common interest.[288] These proposals were widely ridiculed. Richard Henry Lee called his plans a 'contemptible little Tract' filled with a 'Confusion of ideas, aristocratic pride, [and] contradictory reasoning with evident ill design.'[289] Patrick Henry also attacked Braxton's proposals as an 'Affront and Disgrace to this Country' and acknowledged to John Adams that there was 'among most of our opulent Familys, a strong Byass to Aristocracy.'[290] Lee and Henry resisted attempts to import the British system. They wanted to secure 'substantial and equal liberty' through a legislative-controlled republic.[291] With the help of petitions sent by ordinary Virginians, the radicals made sure that, despite the property qualifications for voting remaining intact, both the upper and lower houses of the Virginia Assembly were popularly elected.[292] New Englanders were astounded by the Convention's commitment to "republican" government. Adams had originally tailored his constitutional proposals to the Southern 'aristocratic temper', but he deemed Virginia's Constitution 'remarkably popular, more so than

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[285] McConville, *King's Three Faces*, p. 308.
[286] *Ibid*., p. 309-311.
[287] An Address to the Convention, 4 May 1776, in Scribner and Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 6, p. 521.
[288] Selby, *Revolution*, pp. 114-115. See also Braxton's 'Loose thoughts on government', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 7 June 1776.
[289] Richard Henry Lee to Edmund Pendleton, 12 May 1776, in Smith et al, eds., *Letters of Delegates*, vol. 3, p. 667.
[290] Patrick Henry to John Adams, 20 May 1776, in Taylor et al, eds., *John Adams*, vol. 4, pp. 200-201.
[291] Proceedings of the Fifth Virginia Convention, 15 May 1776, in Scribner and Tarter, ed., *Revolutionary Virginia*, vol. 7, p. 143.
[292] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 217.

I could ever have imagined, even more popular than *Thoughts on Government*.'[293] The partisans labelled those persons who supported the British constitutions, like Braxton, as the adherents of aristocracy and royal tyranny.

The Consequences of the Rise in "Republican" Sentiments

Following independence and the ratification of the state constitutions, Figure 26 shows that the epithet "republican" became a keyword amongst the partisans. Two years after the Convention, the Virginian jurist and militia officer St. George Tucker appealed to nature in support of "republican" government. 'Love may really be compared to Death', he wrote to a friend, 'it imbues us all, & sets all men upon the same Level – It is the true republican Principle'.[294] '[I]ts no wonder, then', he continued, that 'it should be inculcated in such Governments as Virginia, where by the Constitution all Distinctions of persons are abolished'.[295] Sarah Knott argues that sensibility (which required a socially-turned self) and "republicanism" (which was concerned with self-denial) were in conflict at this time.[296] Tucker's comments, although possibly an anomaly, suggest otherwise. He implied that "republican" government was sensible because it required empathy between representatives who heeded the wishes of their representors, who were 'upon the same Level'.[297] Therefore, at a time when sensibility, the quality of being able to appreciate complex emotions, was deemed the natural basis for human connectedness, many partisans thought that a "republican" was a naturally sympathetic individual. Tucker, consistent with his concern about true representation, also sounded a warning about the persistence of slavery, an unsympathetic institution, in Virginia. He wrote that the equality of white men was 'almost the only Instance wherein the Influence of those ["republican"] Principle[s] is discernible…Slaves, do not wonder at your Chains, where there are such numbers of fair Conquerors to impose them.'[298] But the jurist knew the lesser of the two evils when comparing the British Constitution and Virginia's new government. He contrasted empathetic "republicanism" with the 'Ill judging ambition & the lust of Gain' that 'has induced our Fellow

[293] John Adams to Abigail Adams, 10 June 1776, L.H. Butterfield, ed. *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 42.
[294] St. George Tucker to Edmund Randolph, 31 March 1778, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 4, Folder 6.
[295] *Ibid*.
[296] Knott, *Sensibility,* p. 189.
[297] Tucker to Randolph, 31 March 1778, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 4, Folder 6.
[298] *Ibid*.

Subjects beyond the atlantic [in Britain] to rob us of Possessions which had they but been wise & contented are cultivated for their use.'[299] The epithet "republican" began to set the terms of political debate in the United States and as such its rehabilitation from a widely-despised label was completed.

Whilst an important step in the partisans developing their national character, the popularisation of "republican" led to increasingly vitriolic disputes over who was a true supporter of popular sovereignty. Some argued that elite slaveholders were not virtuous enough to rule. 'But to speak the truth', wrote one correspondent to Tucker in June 1779, 'the manners of the people of our State [Virginia]…that are incumbered…with the negroes don't appear to me well adapted to the equal and frugal spirit of genuine republicanism.'[300] Such a stain on the partisans' claims to freedom, as the black petitioners had earlier made clear, could not be so easily removed. The criticisms that this correspondent made of Virginia's government were more damning. He saw the 'Systems of pensions and posts as widely established here as in the English government' and noted that the 'aristocratic race' in Virginia did not possess a 'truly Roman and natural republican mind'.[301] This writer was not alone in making these criticisms. In Philadelphia some observers divided politics between the "constitutionalists" – who supported Pennsylvania's single-legislature government – and "republicans" – who wanted to push for a mixed government.[302] The "constitutionalists" were often associated with royalism. These sentiments had existed before independence. The schoolmaster James Gilchrist had written in September 1775 to St. George Tucker 'so much for the Royalists – now for the Constitutionalist'.[303] Almost exactly four years after this letter was written, one newspaper writer argued that these royalists were trying to raise the wages of assemblymen. This attempt was 'opposed by the Republicans in the House', wrote "Agricola" (a pseudonym for the Roman statesman Gnaeus Julius Agricola), 'and was done upon the clamorous request of those who call themselves Constitutionalists'.[304] Even before America had split into official political parties, then, the partisans wielded "republican" against those politicians who were not seen to be defending "the people's" interests.

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[299] *Ibid*.
[300] George Stuart to St. George Tucker, 19 June 1779, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 5, Folder 5.
[301] *Ibid*.
[302] Jackson Turner Main, *Political Parties before the Constitution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 177-181.
[303] James Gilchrist to St. George Tucker, 14 September 1775, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), Box 3, Folder 5.
[304] 'Agricola', in *Pennsylvania Journal*, 29 September 1779.

The Popular Appropriation of "Republican"

These self-declared "republicans," whether in Pennsylvania or Virginia, found that their constant invocations of the people's sovereignty often resulted in direct challenges to their right to rule at home. Ordinary Virginians had attacked the gentry for their attempts to dodge military service, and those sentiments only increased after Virginia's new military draft in 1778 targeted all single men, whether rich or poor.[305] As a result of this new law, Virginians made sure that their representatives were committed to the cause. They returned fifty new faces in the March and April elections – a turnover which amounted to thirty-six per cent of the house.[306] The surge in popular politics, which made epithets dependent on meritorious support for independence, was noticed by the British officer and explorer, Thomas Anburey, who had been captured at Saratoga and paroled in Virginia. Anburey noted in April 1779 that 'before the war, the spirit of equality or levelling principle was not so prevalent in Virginia …but since the war, that principle seems to have gained great ground'.[307] This "levelling" principle, the abolition of deference between men, was present in one scene depicted by Anburey. He remembered that Thomas Mann Randolph, the proprietor of Tuckahoe plantation on the James River, had entertained 'three country peasants, who came upon business, entered the room where the Colony and his company were sitting, took themselves chairs, drew near the fire, began spitting, pulling off their country boots all over mud, and then opened their business, which was simply about some continental flour to be ground at the Colonel's mill'.[308] This incident was shocking because the three men had intruded upon a private meeting between their social betters. Deference was supposed to be shown in such an encounter.[309] After the three had left, 'some one observed what great liberties they took; he [Randolph] replied, it was unavoidable, the spirit of independency was converted into equality, and every one who bore arms, esteemed himself upon a footing with his neighbor, and concluded with saying, "No doubt, each of these men conceives himself, in every respect, my equal."'[310] There was no mention of "republican" in this passage, but the implications of that term were clear. The three soldiers knew that the gentry, despite their social status, were not above those who risked their lives in the service of

[305] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 315.
[306] *Ibid*., p. 321.
[307] Letter XVI, 10 April 1779, in Thomas Anburey, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of America; In a Series of Letters*, vol. 2 (London, 1789), p. 370.
[308] *Ibid*.
[309] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Random House, 1992), pp. 232-237.
[310] Letter XVI, 10 April 1779, in Anburey, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 371.

their state and nation.

Virginia's religious dissenters also sought to prove their merit as true "republicans" – as inhabitants worthy of representation in government. There was a significant population of dissenters in the western counties, and the Assembly required their service in the likely event of an Indian war.[311] Emboldened by their centrality to the war effort, the dissenters attacked the established Church of England's association with kingship and tyranny. In October 1776, petitioners from three counties declared 'that the same motive, namely liberty, that exerted them to venture life & fortune in opposing the measures adopted by the King of Parliament of Great Britain' also drove them to oppose 'any form of Government that may be subversive of these Religious Privileges that are a natural Right'.[312] Having 'long groaned under the Burden of an Ecclesiastical Establishment', the dissenters convinced the Assembly to exempt them from establishment taxes on 9 December.[313] The success of these claims for religious freedom was encapsulated in a new term: a 'friend to Religious Tyranny'.[314] The doctor George Gilmer responded to such accusations in October 1777: 'I always have, and ever shall, oppose every species of Oppression and do affirm my opinion of a Church…[to be] a voluntary society of men' for the 'the publick worship of God'.[315] Five years later, the dissenters had aligned "republicanism" with religious freedom. In 1782, William White, the Anglican Bishop of Philadelphia, confronted the dissenters' language. He opposed the notion 'that episcopacy is anti-republican; and therefore opposed to those ideas which all good citizens ought to promote, for securing the peace and happiness of the community.'[316] The 'supposed relation between episcopacy and monarchy', he declared, 'arises from confounding English episcopacy, with the subject at large.'[317] White thought the transformation of epithets had gone too far. The dissenters had helped to tie Anglicanism into an alliance with royal tyranny.

The Responses to the Partisans' Reform of "Republican"

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311 Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty*, p. 47.

312 Petition of Dissenters of Albermarle, Amherst, and Buckingham, 22 October 1776, in 'Legislative Papers', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 18, no. 2 (April 1910), p. 141.

313 Petition of the Dissenters from the Ecclesiastical establishment in the Commonwealth of Virginia, in 'Legislative Papers', no. 3 (July 1910), p. 265 ('long groaned'); Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty*, pp. 60-61 ("exempt").

314 Circular Address of Dr. George Gilmer to the People of Albermarle County, 17 October 1777, in Brock, ed., *Collections*, p. 137.

315 *Ibid*., pp. 137-138.

316 William White, *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered* (Philadelphia, 1782), p. 18.

317 *Ibid*.

As the birthplace of Anglicanism, the partisans' opponents in Britain targeted these sentiments as proof that "republicanism" was unsuited to a stable nation. Although the colonists had been called a 'republican race' since the imperial crisis, Figure 26 shows a surge in "republican" in the British newspapers.[318] Many of these diatribes against "republicanism" had religious undertones. "Republicanism" was likened to an enthusiastic religion and the Congress and its British allies to that ideology's zealots. These arguments can be clearly seen in the many sermons delivered on fast days in support of the British cause. George III had called the first fast day for December 1776, and he subsequently declared fast days every year until 1781. The anxiety amongst British Anglicans that their former subjects had God on their side pervaded these sermons.[319] In Aberdeen, George Campbell declared on the first fast day that the 'loose and republican principles now so openly professed…thro' the British isles…might, after the present controversy is settled and forgotten, involve this country in the most direful calamities.'[320] Campbell hoped that the 'wild schemes of our political visionaries…will in due time be properly exposed, and at length abandoned by every body.'[321] South of Aberdeen, Thomas Carlyle exclaimed from his pulpit in Edinburgh that the colonists' 'treatment of the episcopal clergy' demonstrated that these 'men must be of the highest republican and antimonarchical principles.'[322] He acknowledged that the Church was 'the firmest barrier against fanaticism either in religion or politics.'[323] These British attacks against political enthusiasm, the 'cloudy imagination', as Carlyle called it, 'of the new-England fanatic', had a great deal of power because many "republican" political pamphlets, including Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and James Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), used fictional utopian societies to illustrate their arguments.[324] But, rather than a perfect society, Campbell and Carlyle worried that the partisans had created a dystopia in Britain's former colonies.

On the subject of "republicans," the Virginian planter and playwright Robert Munford had similar worries to these Scottish preachers. But Munford was not a "friend of government."

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[318] 'N.N.', in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 28 December 1765.

[319] Guyatt, *Providentialism*, p. 116. These criticisms of a "republican" spirit in the colonies had also been made in the imperial crisis. See Extract of a letter from London, 19 May 1770 (APS, Philadelphia, Mss.973.3.Ex7).

[320] George Campbell, *The Nature, Extent, and Importance, of the Duty of Allegiance: A Sermon Preached at Aberdeen, December 12, 1776, Being the Fast Day Appointed by the King on Account of the Rebellion in America* (Aberdeen, 1777), in Dickinson, *British Pamphlets*, vol. 4, p. 180.

[321] *Ibid*.

[322] Alexander Carlyle, *The Justice and Necessity of the War with our American Colonies Examined. A Sermon Preached at Inveresk, December 12. 1776, Being the Fast-Day Appointed by the King, on Account of the American Rebellion* (Edinburgh, 1777), in Dickinson, *British Pamphlets*, vol. 4, p. 241.

[323] *Ibid*.

[324] *Ibid*., pp. 242-243 ('fanatic'); Gregory Claeys, 'Introduction', in *idem*., ed., *Utopias of the British Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xxii-xxiii ("utopian").

Before independence he was a political ally of Patrick Henry and had supported the Continental Association in 1774.[325] What changed his mind? In an April 1775 letter to his friend William Byrd III, he expressed concern about the 'evils of a civil war' and the 'obligations' that bound the colonists to 'their sovereign & to the preservation of civil order.'[326] Like many inhabitants in Virginia's southeast, Munford was concerned that the partisans had upended order and peace in the colonies. Choosing to remain at home in Mecklenburg County, he wrote his comedy *The Patriots* in 1777. This play denounced the conformist politics of the new "republican" order.[327] Standing in for Munford, the comedy's protagonist, "Trueman," who was under suspicion for his loyalties, mourned the decline of the independent politician who 'detest[ed] the opprobrious epithet of tory, as much as…the inflammatory distinction of whig.'[328] When one of the judges contended that it was impossible he was 'neither a whig nor [a] tory', "Trueman" responded: 'Whenever the conduct and principles of neither are justifiable, I am neither; as far as the conduct and good principles of either correspond with the duties of a good citizen, I am both.'[329] "Trueman" and "Meanwell," another protagonist who was being prosecuted by the Virginian courts, were both excluded from public office. They were victims of the 'torrent of political enthusiasm' – the torrent of radical "republican" politics – that was 'hid under the disguise of time-serving civility'.[330] Munford's end was no better than his fictional characters. He became a militia captain in 1781 for a short time, took up drinking in 1782, and, like his friend William Byrd III, died bankrupt.[331] Munford was excluded by a new "republican" political system that, according to Michael A. McDonnell, stressed 'political identity over social status.'[332] The resurgence of "republican" had gone too far for many Virginians.

These changes in epithets, however, had not gone far enough for some of America's inhabitants. In a January 1782 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, one partisan worried that – as well as their books, English language, and culture – the "Americans" continued to owe their

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[325] Michael A. McDonnell, 'A World Turned "Topsy Turvy": Robert Munford, "The Patriots," and the Crisis of the Revolution in Virginia', *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (April 2004), p. 241.

[326] Robert Munford to William Byrd III, 20 April 1775, in Maron Tinling, ed., *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia 1684-1776*, vol. 2 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1977), p. 806.

[327] McDonnell, '"Topsy Turvy"', p. 239. Aside from a number of poems, Munford was also the author of "The Candidates," which has become influential for its portrayal of voting in Virginia. (Jay B. Hubbell and Douglass Adair, ed., 'Robert Munford's "The Candidates"', *William and Mary Quarterly* 5, no. 2 [April 1948], pp. 217-257.) For that influence, see Richard R. Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 34-35.

[328] Courtlandt Canby, ed., 'Robert Munford's "The Patriots"', *William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (July 1949), p. 484.

[329] *Ibid*.

[330] *Ibid*., p. 497.

[331] McDonnell, '"Topsy Turvy"', p. 265.

[332] *Ibid*., p. 269.

epithets to Great Britain. The distinction between the supporters of the British constitution and "republicans," he argued, should be preeminent. Despite the best efforts of Paine, Witherspoon, and others, the 'American revolutionists of the present day…assume the appellative Whig', the "Pilgrim" exclaimed, 'a name they are in no way concerned in, and the origin of which is at best local and obscure?'[333] British party labels, he noted, gave the impression 'that these two classes of men ["whigs" and "tories"] are liege subjects of one and the same monarch, and are only at variance about some contested points of civil and domestic policy.'[334] To the casual observer, the Revolution was a domestic political dispute between subjects of the same king or a resurgence of the political debates that occurred around the time of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Whilst references to the latter event had worked in the imperial crisis, the "Pilgrim" suggested that the partisans use different terms now that America was independent and sovereign. He declared that the 'immortal *Declaration*' had severed the country 'from the chains of despotism…but upon that event these appellations…should have been instantaneously abolished.'[335] And he concluded: 'There was some reason indeed for distinguishing, in this manner, the ministerial party ["tories"] from the assertors of liberty ["whigs"], prior to the immortal *Declaration*, which at one stroke, severed this country from the chains of despotism and dotage; but upon that event these appellations, as well as a hundred others of the same kind, should have been instantaneously abolished.'[336] He proposed a new set of "American" idioms: 'The free republican of America, and the base mercenary adherent to the cause of tyranny, or two words expressing those ideas, should alone have formed the distinction.'[337] The separation from Britain and its popular myths of subjecthood and benevolent kingship was complete: British subjecthood and aristocracy, "republicanism" and freedom, were synonymous terms.

Conclusion

The partisans' attempts to reform epithets and thereby distinguish themselves from Britain – as "citizens," "Americans," "Long Knives," and "republicans" – was an unfinished revolution that would be amplified in the early republic.[338] But the partisans had made sure that the

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[333] 'The Pilgrim, No. X', in *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, 23 January 1782.
[334] *Ibid*.
[335] *Ibid*.
[336] *Ibid*.
[337] *Ibid*.
[338] Ashis Nandy argues that 'colonialism never seems to end with formal political freedom.' (*The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* [Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983], p. 3.)

principle encapsulated in these terms, that only those inhabitants who merited these labels could use them, was a central feature of their national character. The reform efforts took place because the partisans needed new epithets that could help the nation distinguish itself from Britain. These distinctions thus became an expression of true "Americanness": the sensibility of a person who was independent and self-confident.

This reform process required Britain's former subjects to reorient their understanding of who they were by reference to who they were not. In so doing, they invested many older terms with new meanings to reframe the character of the United States. They were not "British subjects"; they were "citizens." They were not Britons; they were "Americans." They were not vengeful "Long Knives"; they were glorious "Long Knives" who defended Virginia's borders. And they were not royalists; they were "republicans." Those who were deemed unworthy of these labels, however, were vilified and excluded as the dependent followers of a tyrannical king. Yet the partisans' efforts to display their merit regularly came under attack. For instance, in possibly the most powerful epithet of the war, the Shawnee and Lenape nations chastised the "Americans" as merely the same "Virginians" and "Long Knives" that had terrorised Indian country since the English colonists first arrived. Due to the fact that the partisans placed so much emphasis on changing their identity terms following independence, an issue that concerned the sovereignty of the United States, the war over these epithets became a battleground over the right of a new nation to exist and the merits of those persons who claimed these reformed labels.

That contest continued after the Treaty of Paris was drafted in November 1782. The war, which may have claimed as many as thirty thousand partisans and twenty-nine thousand British lives, may have been the defining event in many people's lives, and that fact meant the confrontational usage of epithets – alongside their more emancipatory potential as women and black persons claimed to be "citizens" and "Americans" – showed no signs of abating.[339] The memory of this event was a new battleground for claims of citizenship and belonging in both the United States and the British Empire. In order to make these claims, participants from all sides, whether disaffected or partisan, rich or poor, white or black, appropriated the Revolution's memory and meaning to become included as subjects or "citizens." The next chapter will explore this struggle, showing that the Confederation period – the five years

[339] Simon P. Newman, 'Writing the History of the American Revolution', in Melvyn Stokes, ed., *The State of U.S. History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002), p. 31 ("defining"); Howard H. Peckham, *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 132 ("thirty" and "twenty-nine").

between the end of hostilities in 1782 and the Philadelphia Convention in May 1787 – was a time when new and old epithets alike were invented and re-invented, including "refugee," "loyalist," "British American," and "citizen." These words, many of which were first used in the war itself but became popularised following the conflict, have since become critical to historians' understanding of the Revolutionary period. The scars of independence were not just present on the battlefield, therefore, but also in the very epithets that America used to legitimate its independence from Britain.

Chapter 4

"Pretended Whigs," "Refugees," and "True Loyalists": Reconstructing Epithets in the Confederation Era, 1782-87

Introduction

More than seven years after making his correction in the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson again struggled over the distinction between "subjects" and "citizens." Article VII of the Treaty of Paris read that a 'firm and perpetual peace' would exist 'between his Brittanic Majesty and the said states, and between the *subjects* of the one and *citizens* of the other, wherefore all hostilities both by sea and land shall from henceforth cease.'[1] But who was a "subject" and "citizen" following a Revolution that had resulted in these terms becoming contested in the United States and Britain? Jefferson explained the issue: 'There is no middle character [between "citizens" or "subjects" and "aliens"]. Every man must be one or the other of these.'[2] In a July 1783 letter to Philip Turpin, a merchant trying to return to Virginia from Britain as a "citizen," he attempted to understand whether disaffected persons were Britain or America's problem. To sort out this matter, he distinguished between three classes of "refugees," subjects who held allegiances to the British: 'Voluntary refugees since Apr. 1775…Exiles since the same period… [and] Natives who have at any time borne arms with the enemy against this Commonwealth.'[3] The latter group, he argued, were the most odious variety of traitors. They had taken 'arms on the other side with the nefarious purpose of subjugating [America]' – an act that he believed to be 'criminal.'[4] His attempt to categorise participants like Turpin based on their 'intention alone' (whether they posed a threat to the fledgling states) was a powerful move.[5] Jefferson had made an entire group of people into "criminals," British subjects who could not return to Virginia, as opposed to the meritorious "citizens" who deserved rights and protection in the United States.

As with the Declaration, Jefferson made these statements whilst a larger debate over epithets took place in Virginia. The postwar governor of that state, Benjamin Harrison, had

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1 'The Paris Peace Treaty', 30 September 1783, *Avalon*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp>, accessed 15 September 2018.
2 Notes on British and American Alienage, 1783, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6, p. 433.
3 Thomas Jefferson to Philip Turpin, 29 July 1783, in *Ibid*., p. 328.
4 *Ibid*., pp. 328-329.
5 *Ibid*., p. 329.

submitted a "Citizen Bill" for debate in the assembly, which aimed to arrest the 'subjects of ye King of Great Britain' who, Harrison believed, had formed a 'seditious & malignant party in the bowels of the state'.[6] This Bill dominated political debate in Virginia.[7] 'Yesterday a petition from Hanover with near 300 subscribers was presented', recollected one congressman, 'praying the refugees may not be allowed the right of citizenship.'[8] Following much debate, the Assembly decided on 2 July 1783 to allow 'every species of Men [into Virginia] except natives who had borne arms against the state.'[9] This was a compromise move. If the government was to define treachery as an association with the enemy, Jefferson wrote, then 'it must sweep off a number of our very good citizens who under the operation of their fears furnished the enemy while here with provisions, transported their baggage, their ammunition…and did many other acts of service to them.'[10] Jefferson made another interesting statement in the conclusion to his letter, when he declared that he could not exclude someone 'whose talents and merit I respect'.[11] The politics of epithets following the war, therefore, still concerned the politics of merit.

Turpin was not alone in his struggle for citizenship. The first chapter of this thesis began with the problem of subjecthood – the colonists' attempts to show that they were worthy of being called "British subjects" – and the peace precipitated another crisis over belonging. Similar to the imperial crisis, that challenge involved large numbers of people claiming that they were worthy of citizenship or subjecthood in the aftermath of a destructive conflict; and, like the crisis, the national authorities – now including the United States – tried to reconstruct "citizen" and "subject" to exclude undesirable persons. This postwar challenge has been given significant attention, but scholars have not considered the connections of these claims for belonging to debates over Revolutionary memory. Douglas Bradburn has written that an 'ideal of citizenship emerged clearly by the end of independence and transformed the nature of politics, and political rhetoric, in the new United States.'[12] Despite this work, the rise of this ideal amongst politically marginalised persons has not been connected to the larger

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6 George Skillern to William Davies, 16 March 1782, in William P. Palmer, ed., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and other Manuscripts, 1652-1781, Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond*, vol. 3 (Richmond, 1875), p. 101 ('subjects'); A Proclamation for arresting British subjects in Virginia, 19 December 1782, in *Ibid*., p. 400 ('seditious').

7 John Marshall to James Monroe, 12 December 1783, in Herbert A. Johnson et al, eds., *The Papers of John Marshall*, vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 110.

8 Joseph Jones to James Madison, 8 June 1783, *Letters of Joseph Jones of Virginia, 1777-1787*, <http://www.loc.gov/resource/lhbcb.04631>, accessed 18 August 2016.

9 John Marshall to James Monroe, 12 December 1783, in Johnson et al, eds., *John Marshall*, vol. 1, p. 110.

10 Thomas Jefferson to Philip Turpin, 29 July 1783, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6, p. 329.

11 *Ibid*.

12 Bradburn, 'Problem of Citizenship', p. 1097.

transatlantic battles over the Revolution's memory. Alfred F. Young and Sarah Purcell have focused on the transition from a radical interpretation of the Revolution, which focused on equality, to a more conservative interpretation, which stressed national unity.[13] But they do not explore the contest for citizenship. Likewise, historians of Britain have written about the issue of people asserting their rights and status as British subjects after the conflict. Maya Jasanoff has explored the struggles of disaffected persons after the war as they sought to find new homes in Canada, Britain, the Caribbean, and India.[14] Furthermore, Matthew Lockwood, Eliga Gould, and Peter J. Marshall have closely examined the imperial reaction to these claims as elite Britons tried once again to bring the empire together after a war.[15] These scholars have also not made clear the importance of memory to these wider claims for national belonging. The inattention of both early Americanists and British scholars to the link between belonging and memory may be because memory studies of the Revolution have become fragmented by region, population group, and historiographical interest.[16] Once this wider war over Revolutionary memory becomes the centre of historical attention, it becomes possible to see that the epithets people used and fought over were themselves claims – claims of belonging and merit in a destructive conflict.

Determined to claim their rights and status as "citizens" and British subjects through their participation in the conflict, both the partisans and their enemies reconstructed epithets: they made sure that labels, particularly "refugee," "loyalist," "British American," and "citizen," were restricted to only the chosen few. But, in reconstructing epithets, the inhabitants of both Britain and Virginia opened another chapter in the war over words. These epithets were bitterly contested as people argued that they were on the side of right in the Revolution. Whereas many disaffected persons called themselves "refugees" as a way to encompass their suffering and bitterness in a single term, the partisans labelled these beleaguered persons as criminals undeserving of equal treatment under the law. Whilst these "refugees" labelled themselves as "loyalists" to gain reward from the British, many parliamentarians and other observers instead

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13 Sarah Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, p. 52; and Young, *Shoemaker and the Tea Party*. See also Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution, 1783-1815* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1975), pp. 1-2; McDonnell, 'War Stories', in Spero and Zuckerman, *Revolution Reborn*, p. 11; and Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: "The People," The Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 177.

14 Jasanoff, *Liberty' Exiles*.

15 Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*; Gould, *Persistence of Empire*, ch. 6; and P. J. Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic: The United States and the British Empire after American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). See also *idem*., *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

16 This problem of fragmentation is discussed in Alon Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997), pp. 1386-1403.

looked to reconcile themselves with the "Americans," or "British Americans," as they were occasionally known, so that a defeated nation could justify why they had fought against their former subjects. And whilst the elite male partisans excluded native peoples, black persons, and white women from calling themselves "citizens," many of these politically marginalised inhabitants declared that their service and sacrifices in the war had earned them their titles as rightful "citizens." The sense of betrayal that many of America's inhabitants felt, whether partisan or disaffected, set the stage for the war over words in the postwar period and in the early national era following the Revolution.

Refugee

The Origins of "Refugee"

The post-war period was a mirror image of the imperial crisis: whereas the partisans had been trying to prove themselves as British subjects before independence, many disaffected persons now called themselves "refugees" to show that they were worthy of Great Britain's support and praise. Similar to the term "friend of government," the epithet "refugee" encompassed a vast number of grievances into a single term. Though early Americanists have not given this label much attention, with Maya Jasanoff and Aaron Coleman largely using "loyalist" and "refugee" as interchangeable terms, the anger that underpinned the latter label due to the war's atrocities was palpable.[17] Figure 27 shows the significant growth in the use of the term during the confederation period as the disaffected called themselves "refugees" to prove that they were worthy of being accepted by Britain for their struggles, and the partisans attacked their perceived opponents as criminal "refugees" seeking refuge from justice abroad in the far-flung corners of the British Empire.

In their response to the conflict, the "refugees" developed a sense of anger and injustice that they first turned against the partisans. In an attack on Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1780 the presiding officer deemed it 'impossible to prevent the Refugees burning the Presbiterian Meeting House and the Court House, against both which (especially the former) the Refugees

[17] For histories of "refugee" in America, see Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*; and Aaron Coleman, 'Loyalists in War, Americans in Peace: The Reintegration of the Loyalists, 1775-1800' (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2008). For a historical study of "refugee" in Britain, which does not examine this period, see Caroline Shaw, *Britannia's Embrace: Modern Humanitarianism and the Imperial Origins of Refugee Relief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

had a particular Resentment.'[18] These attacks against a meeting house and the courts – against the partisans' supposed religious "enthusiasm" and extra-legal justice – encapsulated the disagreements that the disaffected had had with their enemies since the imperial crisis. These issues had been fomenting over the course of the Revolution and they now came into the open as the disaffected were exasperated by defeat. The experiences of Jonathan Boucher and James Parker are instructive. As the war came to a close, the Virginia clergyman Jonathan Boucher's letters increasingly dwelt on the violence that the partisans inflicted on 'our Refugees'.[19] He reported that a 'Mr Thomlinson, a Refugee from N. Carolina, who is come down into the North, to take Shelter amid his native Hills, till this Tyranny be overpast.'[20] For Virginians who had fought with Dunmore, whether white or black, this "tyranny" involved being employed against their will in the lead mines in the southwest – in the very mines run by Charles Lynch and his band of vigilantes.[21] Margaret Parker, the wife of the Scottish merchant James Parker, was also frustrated with the actions of these supposed "patriots." She wrote to her husband expressing her 'mortification' that he was being 'insulted especially by a set not worthy to be your [friends]'.[22] Parker hoped that the 'many clever & good men among us' would 'get the power into their hands when things come to be a little more settled'.[23] The idea that the Parkers had been deserted by people who only a decade prior had enjoyed their company was significant. For the "refugees," their exile was personal: they were often fleeing their former friends and neighbours rather than faceless partisans seeking revenge.

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[18] Lieutenant Colonel Buskirk's Report to Brigadier General Sterling, 26 January 1780, in Correspondence, Original – Secretary of State, Dispatches and Miscellaneous (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 8, f. 25.

[19] Jonathan Boucher to John James, 10 July 1776, in Boucher Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, Mss 93 B66), Folder 7, Item 33. See also Jonathan Boucher to John James, 23 December 1777, in *Ibid*., Folder 9, Item 41; and Jonathan Boucher to John James, 18 January 1781, in *Ibid*., Folder 11, Item 52.

[20] Jonathan Boucher to John James, 5 March 1776, in *Ibid*., Folder 7, Item 29.

[21] Evidence of these crimes was detailed in a number of postwar petitions to the British government. See, for example, the memorial of Anthony Flavel from Norfolk. (Petition, in American Loyalist Claims [NA, London], A.O. Series 13, Volume 26, f. 107.) For these mines, see Lead Mine Accounts and Receipts, 1778-1780 (LVA, Richmond).

[22] Margaret Parker to James Parker, 29 July 1783, in Parker Papers (LRO, 920 PAR 1), Volume 22, Item 23.

[23] *Ibid*.

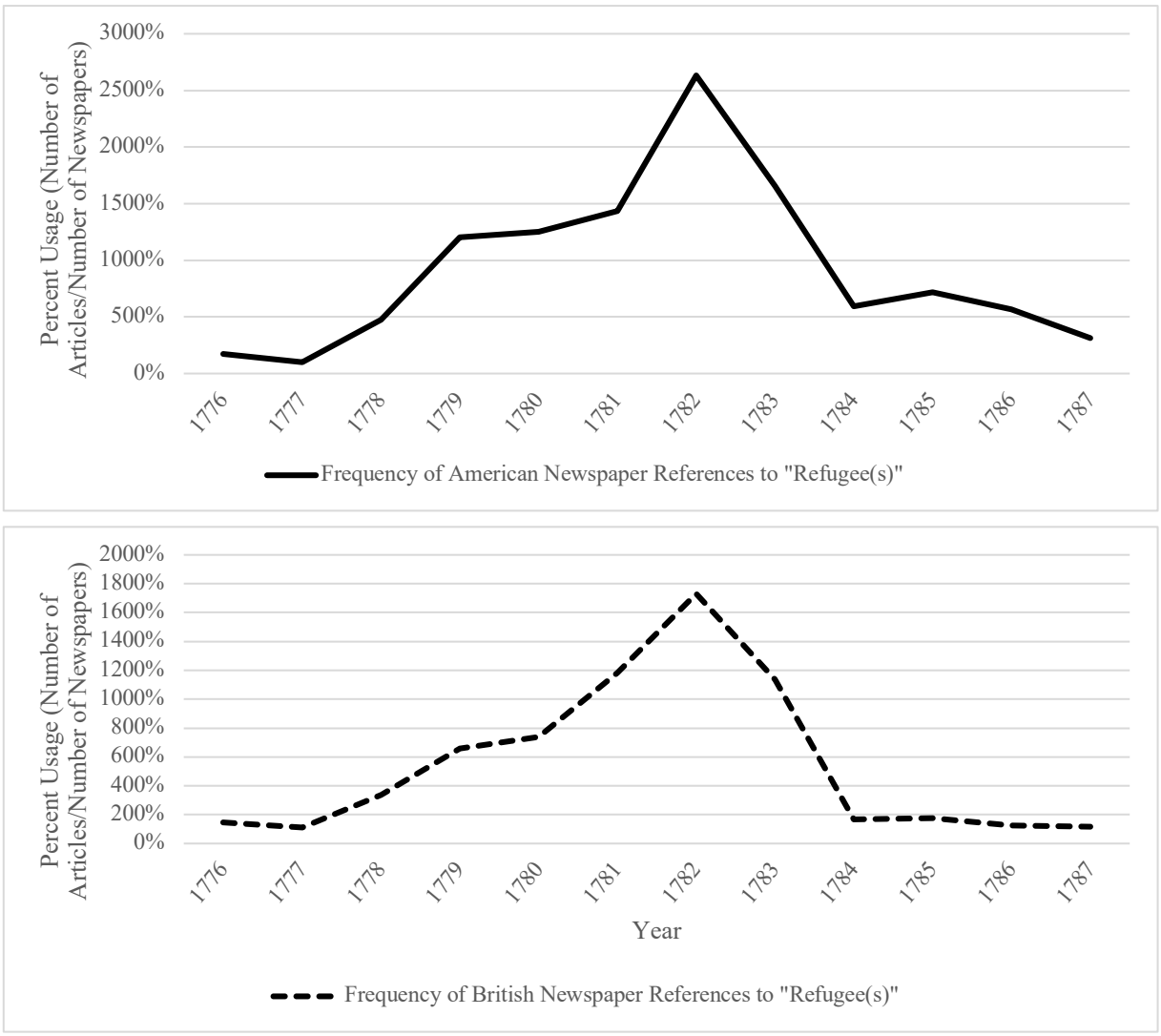

Figure 27: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Refugee(s)," 1776-87.

Besides anger at the partisans' atrocities, the term "refugee" was also tinged with tragedy as the possibility of exile became a reality for many, including the Parkers. Following the evacuations of New York, Charleston, and Savannah, the British settled the "refugees" in Britain, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Saint Augustine. Having lost their homes and livelihoods, the twenty to sixty thousand disaffected persons who were forced to leave the United States argued that they were "refugees" from the partisans and their violent persecutions.[24] This fact was even acknowledged by the partisans themselves. The Virginia delegates to Congress accepted that many former neighbours fled because they felt 'a prey to the violence their conceive they have so much reason to apprehend'.[25] As with the French Calvinists – the

[24] Philip Ranlet, 'How Many Americans Left the United States?', *The Historian* 76, no. 2 (Summer 2014), pp. 278-307.

[25] Virginia Delegates to Benjamin Harrison, 23 August 1783, in Smith et al, eds., *Letters of Delegates*, vol. 20, p. 584.

originators of the term "refugees" – who had fled their homeland after King Louis XIV refused their right to religious freedom, the disaffected used this term to emphasise the *push* factors: the sense of fear that drove them to seek safety in other parts of the British empire.[26] The physical break with Virginia, their homeland, was again put in personal terms. Boucher, who eventually became the vicar of Epsom in Surrey, told his friend John James that his own uncle had 'broke[n] off' his 'old Principles & fro[m] me, & is on the point of return. to America.'[27] There were numerous examples of similar letters, which put the break between Britain and America in familial language. Though he could return to America, Sarah Jerdone's son John, who had escaped much of the war by studying in Scotland, explained the attraction of returning to America. Even though he had spent a number of years outside of Virginia, he still felt an emotional connection to his place of birth. 'I gladly embrace this opportunity [to write]', he wrote' as I have done every one that ever offered since I left my native Home – but I fear much few [letters] or none of them have ever reached your hand[.]'[28] The attraction of returning to his 'native country' to 'exercise those talents which God gave me' was preferable to living abroad.[29] Those "refugees" who had been forced to seek refuge from their native country, Virginia, felt the same way.

Despite these feelings of anger, and often because of them, the suffering the partisans inflicted on the "refugees" was returned in full measure. In retaliation for the death of Philip White from New Jersey, Captain Richard Lippincott and his disaffected friends murdered Joshua Huddy on 12 April 1782.[30] On his chest they pinned a placard: 'We the Reffugees having with Grief Long beheld the Cruel Murders of our Brethren and Finding Nothing but Such Measures Daily Carrying into Execution We therefore Determine not to suffer without taking Vengeance For numerous Cruelties…and Further Determine to Hang Man for Man as Long as a Reffugee is left Existing.'[31] The message concluded: 'UP GOES HUDDY FOR PHILIP WHITE.'[32] This local act erupted into an international incident after Washington forced a group of British officers to draw straws on who would be executed in retaliation for Huddy's murder. Sir Charles Asgill, who had been taken prisoner at Yorktown, drew the short

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26 Shaw, *Britannia's Embrace*, p. 17.
27 Jonathan Boucher to John James, 20 July 1780, in Boucher Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, Mss 93 B66), Folder 10, Item 49.
28 John Jerdone to Sarah Jerdone, 27 June 1783, in Jerdone Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 39.1 J47), Box 1, Folder 2.
29 *Ibid*.
30 Hoock, *Scars of Independence*, pp. 335-339.
31 'Vengeance: The Court Martial of Captain Richard Lippincott', 1782, in Peckham, ed., *Sources of American Independence*, vol. 1, p. 499.
32 *Ibid*.

straw. As his mother Sarah Asgill pleaded for her son's life, Lippincott was tried for the murder that started the whole affair. The Captain was able to leverage his status as a "refugee" to argue before a court that he was merely acting in self-defence. 'The Rebels, when they happened to fall in our hands', he pleaded to the jury, 'have *generally* been Exchanged, while those who early staked their *all*, on the final success of the Royal Cause…[have been] made to suffer cruel and ignominious death'.[33] The injustice in the treatment of the disaffected was readily apparent to Lippincott. He argued that the 'Laws of War and of nations have been wrested from the protection of Subjects of an established Empire, and held sacred to those who have no *National Character*, and who are consequently not proper objects of the protection of those Laws.'[34] In a continuation of themes seen in the last chapter, Lippincott's criticisms of "national character" may have been a pointed critique of America's subservience to France. Furthermore, the fact that the partisans, whom he called unlawful "rebels," were able to determine who deserved the laws of war was, to him, a mockery of justice. The defendant then closed his case on 22 June by declaring himself to be a '*Loyal Refugee*.'[35] In the end, Lippincott's arguments saved him. He was found not guilty – and promptly fled to Canada – and Asgill was freed to fight other (French) Revolutionary wars in the future.

The Partisans Associate the "Refugees" with Criminality and Conspiracy

These acts of retaliation, committed by Lippincott and many other disaffected persons in Virginia and elsewhere, convinced the partisans that the "refugees" were hardened criminals. Rather than meriting sympathy, many partisans, reflecting on the wartime struggles, argued that the disaffected were "robbers" seeking refuge for their crimes behind British lines. The partisans' hostility was reflected in the increased usage of "refugee" in continental newspapers, as shown in Figure 27. There were many examples of these sentiments. One newspaper judged the 'refugees' were 'a parcel of the most abandoned wretches, and may be justly stiled the refuse of the earth'.[36] George Mason declared that the 'Refugee Barges' who continuously attacked the Chesapeake Bay were a 'Band of Robbers.'[37] The papers also reported that these "robbers" consisted of African-descended persons and disaffected inhabitants. 'On Sunday last

[33] Proceedings of a General Court Martial held at New York in the Province of New York, 3 May to 22 June 1782, in *Ibid*., pp. 558-559.
[34] *Ibid*., p. 561.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 582.
[36] *The Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer*, 11 September 1782.
[37] Arthur Lee to George Mason, 25 March 1783, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 2, p. 767.

[in June 1782]', a newspaper in Philadelphia lamented, 'five whale boats, manned by a number of refugees and negroes from New York…What other mischief they may have done we cannot yet hear.'[38] The association of free and formerly-enslaved black persons with disaffected whites continued to be key to declarations that both were plotting an insurrection in the United States.[39] Politicians who opposed the reintegration of the "refugees" regularly played upon these fears of rebellion. One mock letter to Lord North in October 1783 announced the formation of a 'whole tory society' which was bent on courting 'the favour of some whig Leaders…That our power being thus firmly established, we should by law eradicate the very seeds of whiggism, without excepting a single male through favour, friendship, or affection.'[40] These fears even extended to the western counties where some partisans feared that the Scots-Irish inhabitants were allying themselves with the Indians to entirely extirpate the Virginians from the Country.'[41] The partisans made clear that if Virginians let any of those "refugees" through the door then they would undermine the United States from within.

The debts that many Virginians owed to these "refugees," such as James Parker, convinced many ordinary partisans that the disaffected were not just criminals – they were in fact aiding the British Empire in oppressing Virginia. In the Old Dominion alone these debts amounted to more than two million pounds.[42] Elite Virginians worried that, if the states refused to pay what they owed, then the state would become bankrupt and the national honour of the United States besmirched.[43] Britain's merchant class agreed that America's honour was on the line. James Parker was so incensed at the intransigence of Virginians on the debt issue that he forbade his son, Patrick, from returning there. He advised Patrick that Virginians were 'the most unprincipalled villains on earth'.[44] Parker did not recognise how vexed a political issue debt was in Virginia. For most ordinary people, paying the debts of "refugees," those persons who continued to attack the Chesapeake on board privateers, appeared contrary to Revolutionary principles.[45] A group of petitioners from Caroline County in 1783 argued that Britain was trying to reimpose colonialism through debt. The 'majority', they declared, knew

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38 *The Freeman's Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer*, 17 July 1782.
39 Buskirk, *Standing in Their Own Light*, p. 47.
40 'To Lord North, Virginia, 17 October 1783', in *The Boston Evening-Post and the General Advertiser*, 20 December 1783.
41 Christopher Greenup to Leven Powell, 8 August 1783, in Leven Powell Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 65 P87), Box 1, Folder 28.
42 Ragsdale, *A Planters' Republic*, p. 261.
43 Nathanael Greene to George Washington, 29 August 1784, in W. W. Abbot et al, eds., *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series*, vol. 2 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 60.
44 James Parker to Patrick Parker, 20 October 1787, in Parker Papers (LRO, 920 PAR I), Volume 41.
45 Pybus, 'Jefferson's Faulty Math', p. 258.

the 'impolicy Injustice, and oppression, of paying British debts.'[46] The solution to this quandary, they declared, was to extinguish all British debts incurred before the Revolution. This policy made George Mason nervous. It played to the expectations of the 'Ministry in Great Britain' or the 'Torys here', including James Parker, who argued that indebtedness and deliverance from debt was the true cause of the revolt.[47] 'In Conversation upon this Subject', lamented Mason, 'we sometimes hear a very absurd Question – "If we are now to pay the Debts due to British Merchants, what have we been fighting for all this while?" – Surely not to avoid our Debts; but to rescue our Country from the Oppression & Tyranny of the British Government, and secure the Rights and Liberty of ourselves & our Posterity'.[48] Despite these comments, most white Virginians were unwilling to forget the debt that the King and his "refugees" owed them in blood and treasure.

Mason's comments should not make one think that elites did not hold to these conspiratorial views on the "refugees." Though a significant proportion of elite partisans disagreed with the notion that all of America's debts should be forgiven, they remained wedded to the idea that the "refugees" were not just synonymous with criminality, but also with conspiracy. Their suspicions were not helped by Britain's formation of the Boards of "Associated Refugees" and "Associated Loyalists" in the war. These organisations were designed to equip "refugees" for raids on America's coasts, but some Virginians believed that they were pressure groups for criminals.[49] The lawyer John Francis Mercer asserted that Great Britain's policy of refusing to enter into a commercial treaty with America was 'the offspring of some sett of Refugees.'[50] In reality, Britain's intransigence was actually the result of them believing that the states, and not Congress, held commercial authority in America. Regardless, Mercer argued that the "refugees'" influence on these matters 'has taken strong hold on all ranks in England & seems to have sunk deep into the minds of the ministry.'[51] The Minister to the Court of St. James's, John Adams, in particular, blamed his failures of diplomacy with the

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46 'Caroline County, Virginia, Petition', in *Royal Gazette*, 15 November 1783.

47 George Mason to Patrick Henry, 6 May 1783, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 2, p. 776 ('Ministry') and 777 ('Torys'). For an example of this view, see Adair and Schutz, ed., *American Rebellion*, p. 121. The notion that debt lead to the Revolution has also garnered attention from historians. See Emory G. Evans, 'Private Indebtedness and the Revolution in Virginia, 1776 to 1796', *William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (July 1971), pp. 349-374; Holton, *Forced Founders*, pp. 44-65; and Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, pp. 84-123.

48 George Mason to Arthur Campbell, 7 May 1783, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 2, p. 776.

49 A Declaration by the Honourable Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists, 28 December 1780, in Correspondence, Original – Secretary of State (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 82, f. 29 ("equip"); George Mason to the Virginia Delegates in Congress, 3 April 1781, in Rutland, ed., *George Mason*, vol. 2, p. 680 ("criminals").

50 John Francis Mercer to Henry Tazewell, 13 September 1783, in Smith et al, eds., *Letters of Delegates*, vol. 20, p. 670.

51 *Ibid*.

British on the "refugees." Adams believed the exiles had convinced the British to fortify the Canadian border, construct a Great Lakes fleet, intrigue with the Indians, and retain their posts in the northwest.[52] The King, he argued, 'has an habitual Contempt of Patriots and Patriotism…and in supporting those who have a contrary Character.'[53] It was 'this Principle', Adams noted, that 'account[ed] for the Number of Tories' found in successive British administrations and 'the immoderate Attachment to American Refugees…in all of them.'[54] The truth was far less exciting than Adams's or Mercer's speculations. The "refugees" had limited lobbying power in Britain, and even that small amount of political capital was fast diminishing.[55] Some Britons were deeply suspicious of the "refugees" after their repeated promises during the war that four-fifths of America's population were loyal and waiting to strike the partisans, particularly in South Carolina and Georgia.[56] A respondent to "Plain Truth" berated the disaffected as a 'mischievous and troublesome set of people', and asked how long the "refugees" would 'abuse the patience of the people of England?'[57]

Having associated the "refugees" with conspiracy, many partisans agreed that the disaffected were not just launching a plot against Virginia – they were also attempting to undermine America's newfound independence. The disaffected had not succeeded with guns and arms, some argued, so they had turned to subterfuge in order to re-establish British rule in North America. The Virginia Delegates to Congress regularly sent letters to the governor Benjamin Harrison arguing that the "refugee" settlements, particularly in Canada, would serve as a platform for future incursions against the fledgling republic. The settlements, they argued in September 1783, will 'probably terminate in the sudden establishment of a very rich & powerful neighbour to the United States & certainly a very inimical one.'[58] The letters of Edmund Pendleton to Richard Henry Lee show that these sentiments persisted for years after the war's conclusion. In 1785, Pendleton feared that Britain kept 'a Lusting Eye on the Dominion of America'.[59] Like the debtors above, the Speaker blamed the "refugees" for the creeping colonial influence that he thought the British were trying to impose on America.

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52 John Adams to John Jay, 3 December 1785, in Lint et al, eds., *John Adams*, vol. 18, p. 5.
53 *Ibid*., p. 6.
54 *Ibid*.
55 Charles R. Ritcheson, '"Loyalist Influence" on British Policy Toward the United States After the American Revolution', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1973), pp. 1-17.
56 Joseph Galloway, *The examination of Joseph Galloway, Esq; late speaker of the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania, before the House of Commons in a Committee on the American Papers, with Explanatory Notes* (London, 1779), p. 5.
57 *Morning Chronicle*, 6 May 1787.
58 Virginia Delegates to Benjamin Harrison, 8 September 1783, in Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., *James Madison*, vol. 7, p. 301.
59 Edmund Pendleton to Richard Henry Lee, 21 February 1785, in Mays, ed., *Edmund Pendleton*, vol. 2, p. 473.

Britain's intransigence in following the Treaty's recommendations entrenched conspiratorial fears amongst the partisans that the "refugees" were attempting to undermine the Revolution from within and without. 'Whether they [the British] are Stimulated to this Conduct by the exiled Tories and refugees', Pendleton declared in 1785, '[…] is a point difficult to decide'.[60] Like many partisans at the time, George Washington also worried that the 'cause of all these commotions' in America was the result of 'British influence disseminated by the Tories'.[61] Resorting to a favourite metaphor, he wrote: 'Commotions of this sort, like snow-balls, gather strength as they roll, if there is no opposition in the way to divide & crumble them.'[62] Pendleton even argued that this threat, which seemed to be the very opposite of the partisans' '*just* and *manly*' approach to warfare, was so pressing that the militia should meet once a year, 'and in case of a War to throw the Militia into an Arrangement like our minute[men] Plan, for defence until a regular Army can be raised'.[63] Given that these minutemen were meant to be available at a moment's notice, Virginia's elites took the "refugees'" threat to their independence seriously.[64]

If one closely examines Britain's views of these "refugees," however, the Virginian partisans clearly overplayed their association of the "refugees" with conspiracy. As with the newspaper writer "Plain Truth," cited above, many British generals and parliamentarians saw the "refugees" as a nuisance. General Carleton shared this view. Despite conducting the evacuation of the "refugees" from New York on 25 November 1783, he wrote a year later to the parliamentarian Thomas Townshend worrying that George Washington himself would 'offer the Loyalists within the [British] lines…a Restoration of the rights of Citizens'.[65] He believed that Washington was attempting to 'establish an Interest among the Loyalists, and gain him their good Will, with a prospect of future support for by what name soever they shall in future be distinguished, they are likely to form a very powerful Party…[and would fall in] with anything that wears the appearance of a Monarchical, in opposition to every Republican Principle.'[66] Though Carleton acknowledged the wartime service of disaffected people, his

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60 *Ibid*.
61 George Washington to David Humphreys, 22 October 1786, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Confederation Series*, vol. 4, p. 297.
62 *Ibid*.
63 Pendleton to Lee, 21 February 1785, in Mays, ed., *Edmund Pendleton,* vol. 2, p. 473.
64 These fears took place at a moment of military reorganisation. See Harrison M. Ethridge, 'Governor Patrick Henry and the Reorganization of the Virginia Militia, 1784-1786', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85, no. 4 (October 1977), pp. 427-439.
65 Guy Carleton to Thomas Townshend, 16 November 1782, in Papers of American Loyalists (APS, Philadelphia, Mss.973.314.L95).
66 *Ibid.*

letter also recognised that the "refugees" were motivated more by their pocketbooks than by support for the Crown. On seeing the new settlements in Canada, Carleton did not deviate from his earlier comments. Forced to live in makeshift towns and tents, the "refugees'" wrote many petitions for support, which they argued they deserved due to their sufferings in the conflict. These actions convinced some Britons that their allies may have more in common with the partisans.[67] 'I hear with much concern from many persons who have returned from Nova Scotia', Guy Carleton wrote in September 1783, 'that the Republicans have great interest and influence in that province, and that some of them are in offices of trust and confidence; these informations have greatly discouraged the Loyalists, who [fear]…the same persecuting spirit which has driven them into the woods of Nova Scotia, will not suffer them to remain even there in peace and tranquility.'[68] Carleton feared that the "refugees" were just as belligerent as the partisan "republicans" that had instigated the Revolution.[69]

The Partisans' Reconsideration of the "Refugees"

In highlighting the partisans' fears of conspiracy and criminality, one needs to acknowledge that they did not just hold negative views of the "refugees." Over time, some were even prepared to forgive the "refugees" for their misdeeds. The congressman Ralph Izard reflected on this sea change in opinion.[70] 'Our Legislatures', he wrote, 'have likewise shewn themselves remarkably moderate towards the Refugees. The confiscation, and amercement [financial penalty] Laws are in great measure done away. In this also I hope the other States will follow our example.'[71] Rather than direct their fury at the "refugees," the partisans increasingly blamed the British for the political choices made by disaffected people throughout the war.[72] The "refugees" had 'animosity, and hatred planted by them [the British] in the breasts of our Citizens against each other', Izard wrote.[73] He continued: 'Some joined the Enemy from inclination. Others, in the most difficult times from compulsion…Nine, out of Ten of those who received British protection, I suppose to be of the latter description, and had in the

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67 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, pp. 147-175.
68 Guy Carleton to Brigadier General Fox, 5 September 1783, in Military dispatches (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 111, f. 12.
69 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 170.
70 Rebecca Brannon, *From Revolution to Reunion: The Reintegration of the South Carolina Loyalists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), p. 52.
71 Ralph Izard to Thomas Jefferson, 27 April 1784, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7, p. 130.
72 Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, p. 141.
73 Izard to Jefferson, 27 April 1784, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7, p. 130.

beginning shewn themselves both in Council, and in the Field, friendly to our Cause.'[74] The partisans' animosity toward the British was reflected in their letters. Jefferson, for one, argued that the 'British Newspapers' were undermining the credibility of the United States in Europe – a region where America's newspapers were usually not circulated.[75] After all, many newspapers in London were effectively mouthpieces for the government, with politicians regularly paid newspaper writers for favourable coverage.[76] Responding to these newspapers, Abigail Adams recalled an article from the *Public Advertiser* in April 1785: 'An Ambassador from America! Good heavens what a sound!'[77] These 'beginning squibs', these literary missiles used to damage her husband were, she later argued, 'false – if it was not too rough a term for a Lady to use, I would say as false as Hell, but I will substitute, one not less expressive and say, false as the English.'[78] The sense that the contest was still between corrupted Britons and the virtuous "Americans" allowed many partisans to deflect their anger for the conflict on to the British nation itself.

These anti-British views were often reflected in histories and stories told after the conflict. Instead of blaming the "refugees," the partisans often attacked Britain for the war's atrocities. David Ramsay's *History of the Revolution of South-Carolina*, published in 1785, declared that the 'blood of Americans' was on the redcoats' hands. These soldiers had left the bodies of their victims to be 'devoured by beasts and birds.'[79] The *History* was conspicuous, though, for its more favourable treatment of disaffected persons. He referred to both sides via 'the appellation of tories and whigs, or the friends of the old and new order of things.'[80] Class differences were more fundamental to Ramsay's understanding of allegiances. He contrasted the 'tories in the lower parts of South Carolina', who were 'gentlemen of honor, principle and humanity', and those in 'the interior and back parts', who were 'an ignorant unprincipled banditti'.[81] The fact that the redcoats accepted such recruits was more proof, Ramsay noted, of the injustice of their cause. Travellers who visited historical sites after the war recognised that the redcoats' crimes were etched into the landscape itself. In the summer of 1786, St. George

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74 *Ibid*.
75 Jefferson's Reply to the Representations of Affairs in America by British Newspapers, before 20 November 1784, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7, p. 540.
76 Bickham, *Making Headlines*, p. 44.
77 Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 6 June 1785, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, p. 179.
78 *Ibid*., p. 180 ('beginning squibs'); Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 19 October 1785, in *Ibid*., p. 653 ('false').
79 David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, From a British Province to an Independent State*, vol. 1 (Trenton, 1785), p. 363 ('blood'); *Ibid*., vol. 2, p. 33 ('devoured').
80 *Ibid*., p. 122.
81 *Ibid*., p. 259.

Tucker travelled from Virginia to New York in order to investigate a land claim for a client.[82] On visiting Fort Washington on Manhattan Island, which had held Continental Army prisoners, Tucker declared that the Fort 'was remarkable for the capture of 2700 Americans, who were mostly starved to death by the British General Howe. Humanity revolts and the Ideas excited by a narrative of the treatment they met with.'[83] Despite the fact that the prisoners were paraded in front of New York's disaffected population, Tucker mostly concentrated in his diary on Britain's treatment of the soldiers. He noted that they were kept 'without a morsel of provisions', they were 'distributed into Churches, Bakehouses, etc.' without warmth 'in the extremity of winter' and were 'limitted to two thirds of a ration per man'.[84] In searching the area, he found 'some tatters of American regimental uniforms still to be found on the rocks which are bare in several places. I confess I felt some painful reflections whilst I was on this spot.'[85] The silence of the "refugees" in these narratives, which were filled with abuse for the British, was noticeable.

Besides blaming the British for wartime acts of violence, some Virginians argued that being a "refugee" was, in some sense, a meritorious status. In contrast to the hundreds of thousands of persons who remained neutral or refused to leave the United States, these more forgiving partisans argued that the "refugees" had shown courage in siding with Britain. In some people's view, the "refugees" were either unwilling or unable to understand the Revolution. Thomas Jefferson was perhaps the most prominent exponent of this sympathetic view, which has influenced much subsequent historiography on the "refugees."[86] As noted in the introduction to this chapter, he was originally opposed those "refugees" who had taken up arms, but, like many others, he also had a change of heart. His *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in 1785 and written in response to queries posed in 1780 by François Barbé Marbois, the Secretary of the French delegation in Philadelphia, contained ideas that supported freedom of association.[87] In a section dedicated to the 'the rebels, commonly called tories', Jefferson reconciled himself to the "refugees" by declaring that 'A tory has been properly defined to be

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82 Bettina Manzo, ed., 'A Virginian in New York: The Diary of St. George Tucker July-August, 1786', *New York History* 67, no. 2 (April 1986), p. 179.
83 30 July, in *Ibid*., p. 189.
84 *Ibid*.
85 *Ibid*.
86 For older histories arguing that disaffected persons were sympathetic figures who could not understand the Revolution's radicalism, see Bailyn, *Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*; and Mary Beth Norton, *The British-Americans: The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774-1789* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).
87 Peter S. Onuf and Annette Gordon-Reed, *"Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), pp. 83-94.

traitor in thought but not in deed.'[88] As the conflict faded into memory, Jefferson came to respect the fact that, unlike the many thousands of neutrals, the "refugees" had chosen a side. He mentioned to Katherine Sprowle Douglas, a former resident of Norfolk who had fled to England, that the 'right to take sides is too precious a right and too favourable to the preservation of liberty'.[89] Douglas was glad to hear these comments. She used them to her advantage in letters to Jefferson. She stated that her husband 'never took an active or Sinester Part against the American Interest'.[90] Instead, her 'poor Infatuated Son…Under Sixteen He had a Com[m]ission Cram'd down His Throat by the Lawless Govr. Dunmore.'[91] The partisans, therefore, were increasingly willing to label their former "refugee" enemies as the victims in a narrative where the British were villains.

Loyalist and British American

The Loyalist Claims Commission and the Reconstruction of "Loyalist"

For many "refugees," Great Britain increasingly looked like the villains as well. The disaffected, concerned with Britain's inability or unwillingness to assist their own subjects in the war or afterwards, reconstructed a new term that communicated the sense of betrayal they felt toward Parliament: "loyalist." Despite a great deal of scholarship on what defined "loyalism," no significant work has been done on when or why that epithet, which originated in the English Civil War as a synonym for "royalist," came into popular usage.[92] Figure 28 shows that the epithet "loyalist" was not as popular as its status in the historiography would suggest. True, a "Pausing American Loyalist" in 1775 refashioned Hamlet's famous soliloquy into 'To sign or not to sign! – That is the question!'[93] But, even in the addresses of more hardened disaffected persons, such as Nicholas Cresswell, James Parker, and Jonathan

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88 Jefferson, *Notes*, in Peterson, ed., *Jefferson: Writings*, p. 281.

89 Thomas Jefferson to Katherine Sprowle Douglas, 5 July 1785, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, p. 260.

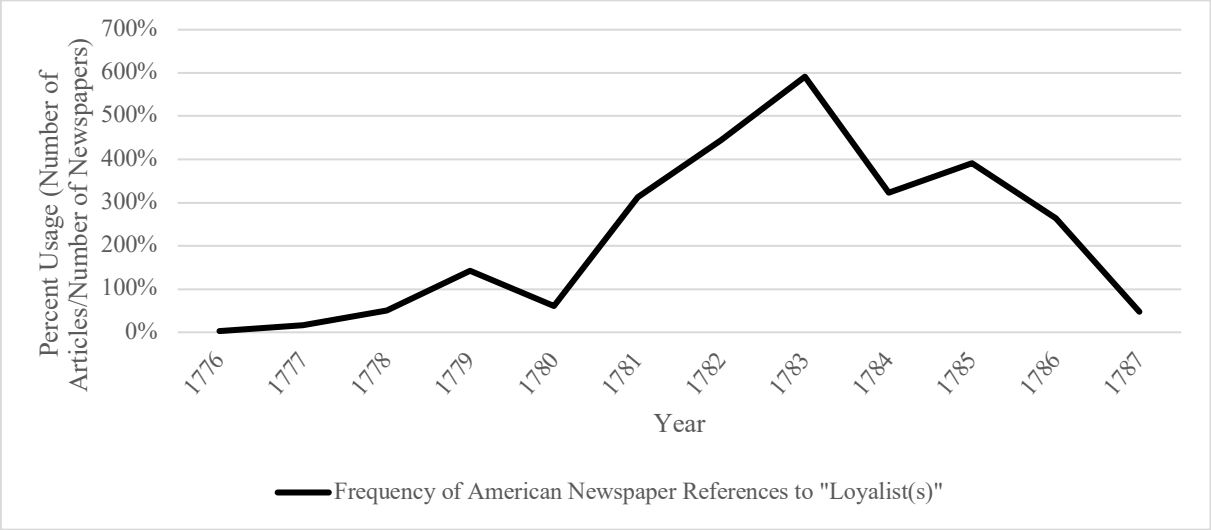
90 Katherine Sprowle Douglas to Thomas Jefferson, 30 July 1785, in *Ibid*., p. 329.

91 *Ibid*.

92 See, for example, Michael Hudson, *The royall, and the royallist's plea* (London, 1647); and John Kettlewell, *The religious loyalist, or, A good Christian taught how to be a faithful servant both to God and the King in a visitation-sermon preached at Coles-hill in Warwick-shire, Aug. 28, 1685* (London, 1685).

93 Harold M. Hyman, ed., 'Hamlet's Soliloquy and American Loyalty', *American Association of University Professors Bulletin* 44, no. 4 (December 1958), p. 736. Andrew Fitzmaurice argues that Hamlet's soliloquy was often mentioned in politics because it could be used to attack political corruption. (Fitzmaurice, 'The corruption of Hamlet', in David Armitage et al, eds., *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], pp. 139-156.)

Boucher, there was scarcely a mention of the term "loyalist."[94] Cresswell's solitary reference to that epithet was in July 1777, when he lamented that the partisans 'commonly honor the Loyalists with the title of Tory, Atheist, Deist'.[95] "Loyalist," in brief, was one term amongst many that the disaffected used in the Revolution. To explain the rise of "loyalist," then, one must turn to the postwar period. Following the war, the petitions, remonstrances, and narratives flowed into Westminster. The "American Loyalists," as they increasingly called themselves, claimed support from the British government. In 1782 a group of "American Loyalists" declared that 'Our Cause is the Cause of Liberty, Loyalty and Patriotism…we must not, cannot, refrain from thus publickly and solemnly declaring to the faithful Subjects of every Government…that we are attached to a Monarchical Form of Government…That our principles are the principles of the Loyal and the Brave, the virtuous and the free – That our sufferings are the sufferings of unprotected Patriotism and persecuted Loyalty.'[96] These comments were intended for British hearts and minds to convince them that the 'American Sufferers' had given up their all in service to the royal cause.[97]



[94] Parker makes a reference to "loyalist" in James Parker's Wartime Diary (LRO, 920 PAR I), Box 13, Item 1, f. 12.

[95] 19 July 1777, in Gill, Jr., and Curtis III, eds., *A Man Apart*, pp. 181-183.

[96] Declaration and Address of American Loyalists, 1782, in Correspondence, Original - Secretary of State (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 82, f. 235.

[97] Proposals for Satisfying the Losses of the American Sufferers by their Agents to William Pitt, December 1784, in Petitions Addressed to William Pitt, Jr. (NA, London), PRO Series 30, Volume 82, Item 220, f. 17.

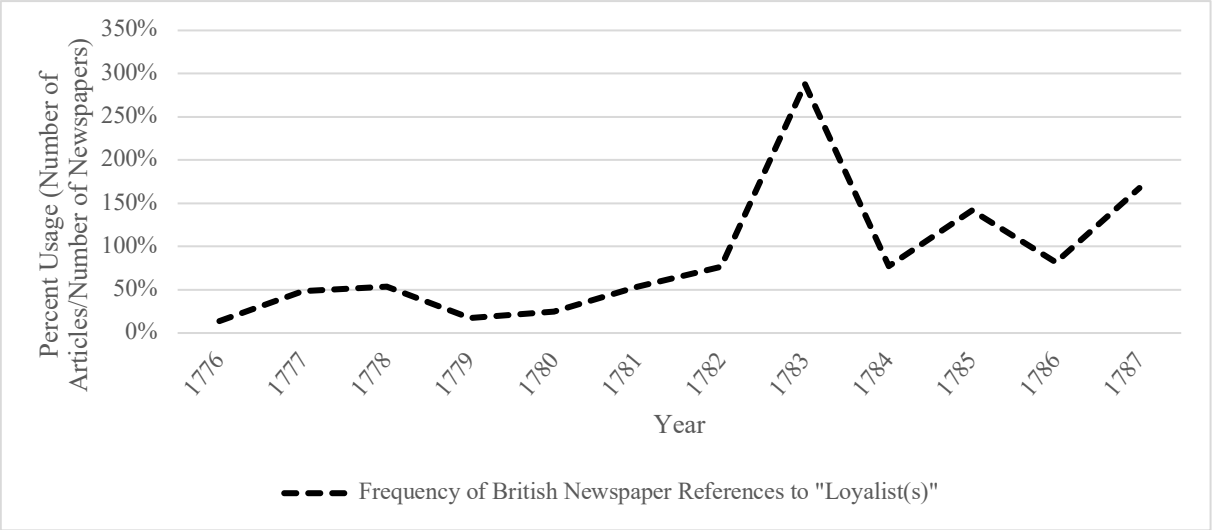


Figure 28: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Loyalist(s)," 1776-87.

Far from a simple ideological attachment to "royalism," therefore, the rise of "loyalist" may have had made more to do with anger and desperation at Britain's labored attempts to help the disaffected. The Claims Commission, for which the British government passed legislation in July 1783, provided the stage on which those who had lost homes, families, and livelihoods could prove their loyalty to the Crown. Declaring oneself to be a "loyalist" before the Commission made sense because the commissioners were directed to enquire into the 'losses and Services of those who had suffered in their Rights, properties, and Professions, in consequence of their *Loyalty* to his Majesty and Attachment to the British Government.'[98] One could lodge a claim at the Lincoln's Inn Fields in London: one of the Inns of Court that housed the Barristers in the city; or, for those "refugees" who found their way to Canada, in Shelburne, Nova Scotia.[99] Though this body has come to be known by historians as the "Loyalist Claims Commission," an innovative system of public welfare, the British government did not have such grand ambitions for what they simply called the 'Claims Commission.'[100] Burdened by £232 million of debt, they established the Commission as a money-saving alternative to the pensions system, which many parliamentarians argued had been exploited by disaffected persons, including the exiled governor of Massachusetts-Bay, Thomas Hutchinson, and Jonathan Boucher.[101] By 1782 the pension system, which had supported richer exiles living in Britain throughout the war, had paid out £40,820 to just 315 people, an unsustainable sum of

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98 John Raithby, ed., *The Statutes at Large, From Magna Charta Being the Second Session of the Sixteenth Parliament of Great Britain*, vol. 35 (London, 1786), p. 698.
99 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 125.
100 Raithby, ed., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 35, p. 698.
101 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 116 ("£232"); Norton, *British-Americans*, p. 192 ("exploited").

money.[102] Lord Shelburne, the man in charge of the Treasury, wrote to John Eardley Wilmot (one of the five commissioners appointed to oversee the investigation): 'The sum given to the American Loyalists is become enormous; some limit is necessary, and a judgment to be formed by some impartial persons of their claims.'[103] In the words of one parliamentarian, the Commission was an 'enquiry', not a 'Bill of Relief.'[104]

The institutional structure of the Commission had an effect on the politics of "loyalist." Britain's frugality created a sense of desperation and conflict over who merited inclusion as a true "loyalist." The agents who applied to the Commission on the richer claimants' behalf warned that 'several pretended Loyalists will apply for a reparation'.[105] They advised that meritorious "loyalists" must be on their 'guard against false Brethren, of which there are some amongst every order of men; and there were but too many in America, who took the oaths on both sides of the question, as suited their convenience.'[106] The Commissioners did not help matters because of their complicated understanding of what defined a "loyalist." There were six 'Classes' of "loyalist": those who 'rendered services' to Britain; those who had 'borne arms'; 'Uniform Loyalists'; 'Loyalist British Subjects resident in Great Britain'; "loyalists" who had defected to Britain; and "loyalists" who had borne arms after defecting from the United States.[107] The most meritorious class of "loyalists" were those who had actively fought in the war, and the richest exiles published historical narratives in support of their claims. However, these narratives often covered up the true reason for their loyalty. The story of John Connolly was a good example. Although he had become loyal in order to save his land, Connolly's *Narrative of the Transactions, Imprisonment, and Sufferings of John Connolly, An American Loyalist* (1783) instead noted that his involvement in the war originated from 'loyalty to my Prince'.[108] Throughout the *Narrative*, Connolly outlined his services to Dunmore, particularly his role with a loyal regiment against the 'Republican party', and imprisonment.[109]

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[102] John Eardley Wilmot, *Historical View of the Commission for Enquiring into the Losses, Services, and Claims of the American Loyalists, at the Close of the War Between Great Britain and Her Colonies in 1783*, intr. and pref. by George Athan Billias (Boston: Gregg Press, 1972), pp. 15-16.
[103] Lord Shelburne to John Eardley Wilmot, 4 September 1782, in *Ibid*., p. 17.
[104] *Ibid*., p. 44.
[105] *Directions to the American Loyalists, in Order to Enable them to State their Cases, By way of Memorial, to the Honourable the Commissioners* (London, 1783), p. 9.
[106] *Ibid*., p. 11.
[107] Wilmot, *Historical View*, p. 57.
[108] Doug MacGregor, 'The Ordeal of John Connolly: The Pursuit of Wealth through Loyalism', in Joseph S. Tiedemann et al, eds., *The Other Loyalists: The Common Sort, Royalism, and the American Revolution in the Middle Colonies, 1763-1787* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), pp. 166-167 ("land"); John Connolly, *A Narrative of the Transactions, Imprisonment, and Sufferings of John Connolly an American Loyalist* (London, 1783), p. 6 ('loyalty').
[109] *Ibid*., pp. 7-8.

His account followed the structure of many claims made to the Commission: they began with a show of loyalty; they then consisted of a narrative of the sufferings inflicted by virtue of being called a 'Tory, an appellation lately revived, and given by the republicans to the loyalists'; and a final declaration of humility as to their poverty.[110] The "loyalists," who had committed to the British cause contrary to all those neutrals who had pivoted between sides, made clear that Parliament owed them for their service.

"Loyalism" and Restitution for Disaffected Persons

Angered by Britain's frugality, many disaffected persons argued that Parliament had betrayed their loyal supporters. With the war over, they felt that Britain had forgotten their former allies. 'The People are so exasperated', wrote one exile in May 1783, that 'they cannot now endure the name of *Englishman*…O Englishmen where is now your national Honor? nothing but Bribery, Corruption & Treason prevails in your Senate, who promised Protection & then basely betrayed [the disaffected]'.[111] To them, the Treaty of Paris was a betrayal of their trust. Article V of the Treaty 'earnestly recommend[ed]' to America's legislatures that they 'provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties'.[112] There was no guarantee in the Treaty, however, that the thirteen states would follow these recommendations – and the assemblies predictably refused to follow that document's stipulations. Politicians sympathetic to the disaffected were frustrated with Britain's weakness at the treaty table. Before the end of 1783, Lord Shelburne's government, who had negotiated the Treaty, was removed from office in a vote of no confidence.[113] With the start of the new year, the lawyer and disaffected writer George Chalmers published a pamphlet which attacked the Treaty's legal foundations. His main grievance was with the British labelling the disaffected as "real British subjects," instead of an epithet which acknowledged their meritorious services. 'But the law of England', he wrote, 'knows nothing assuredly of a *real* subject, or *unreal* subject'.[114] Subjecthood, he

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[110] *Ibid*., p. 9. For another example of a "loyalist" narrative, see James Moody, *Narrative of the Exertions and Sufferings of Lieut. James Moody in the Cause of Government Since the Year 1776. Written by himself*, intr. and notes by Charles J. Bushnell (New York, 1865). British officers also published narratives in support of the disaffected. See John Graves Simcoe, *A Journal of the Operations of The Queen's Rangers From the End of the Year 1777, To the Conclusion of the Late American War* (Exeter, 1787).

[111] M. Pownall to Mr Street, 30 May 1783, in Correspondence, Original - Secretary of State (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 560, ff. 484-485.

[112] 'Paris Peace', 30 September 1783, *Avalon*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp>, accessed 15 September 2018.

[113] Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 119.

[114] George Chalmers, *Opinions on Interesting Subjects of Public Law and Commercial Policy; Arising from American Independence* (London, 1784), p. 8.

declared, 'does not admit of degrees'.[115] This 'unmeaning epithet ["real British subject"]', he feared, was the work of the "American" peace commissioners.[116] These politicians, he argued, wanted to 'gain the virtual acknowledgement of the British Government, that the British Colonies had always been independent…that there had existed *American* subjects and *British* subjects; that the American loyalists, having been American subjects, had incurred confiscation, because, in their active adherence to the British Government, they had violated their allegiance to the United States.'[117] He was right to worry: in October 1783, the Virginia delegates to Congress commented to Benjamin Harrison that the reason they distinguished between "real British subject" was to provide a 'more delicate mode of Excluding those refugees'.[118] Not content with branding the disaffected as "tories," Chalmers rightly feared that the United States, aided and abetted by Britain, had turned rightful "loyalists" into "rebels" undeserving of property rights under international law.

The vast majority of "loyalist" claims reflected Chalmer's comments that they were being betrayed. As one petition put it, 'many look on Loyalty, Ruin, and Disgrace as Synonymous Terms.'[119] And one Georgian even claimed that, due to the lack of provisions for the disaffected, the 'war never occasioned half the distress which this peace has done, to the unfortunate Loyalists.'[120] These claimants contended that they had little money, fewer connections, no jobs, and next-to-no government support. Josiah Hodges, whose property in Norfolk Lord Dunmore destroyed to make way for British fortifications, claimed that he could not find any work and was eventually 'arrested and carried into the fleet for a debt he contracted to support and maintain a helpless family – and to render your memorialist completely miserable it pleased Providence to visit his Children with the small pox while he was a prisoner.'[121] The stories that these Virginians told of their struggles betrayed their frustrations with the way that Britain had prosecuted the conflict. The case of Richard Jolliffe, a middling planter from Princess Anne County who had made his way to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, illustrates this theme. Jolliffe had kept his head down for most of the war. But when the British arrived in Portsmouth, Virginia, in 1780, Jolliffe reported, he 'set out from his own home to go

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115 *Ibid*
116 *Ibid*.
117 *Ibid*., p. 9.
118 Virginia Delegates to Benjamin Harrison, 4 October 1783, in Hutchinson and Rachal, eds., *James Madison*, vol. 7, p. 368.
119 Case of the Loyalists in Virginia to William Franklin, 6 November 1781, in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, etc. (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 175, f. 238.
120 William Johnston to Elizabeth Johnston, 20 April 1783, in Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist* (New York and London: M. F. Mansfield & Company, 1901 [1836]), p. 211.
121 Memorial of Josiah Hodges, in American Loyalist Claims (NA, London), AO Series 13, Volume 96, f. 507.

down to Portsmouth to meet them', but the redcoats were not amenable to new recruits: they 'put [him] on board the prison ship for five days'.[122] He noted to the commissioners that he was only rescued 'when the Company that memorialist commanded appeared and cleared him of all censure.'[123] Clutching a fresh parole from General Matthew, Jolliffe returned to his farm. His troubles were not over. He returned to find his farm had been destroyed by British soldiers plundering the area.[124] Forced to serve in the British army because of poverty, Jolliffe was captured at the Battle of Yorktown and only escaped imprisonment and persecution by hiding on board a ship to New York, where 'he concealed himself down in the lower hold of the ship, notwithstanding they searched for him three times with candles but did not find [him]'.[125] Though the dominant emotions with "refugee" had been anger toward the partisans, the label "loyalist" and "unfortunate loyalist" concerned feelings of betrayal aimed at Britain.

These claimants did not just recapitulate their experiences – the "loyalists" sometimes provided a list of laws, treaties, and statutes which supported their claims for restitution. Feeling angered at Parliament's intransigence, the Pennsylvania politician Joseph Galloway called the British government's debt to the "loyalists" one 'of the highest and most inviolable nature, from which Parliament can never honourably and justly discharge itself'.[126] James Parker agreed. He devoted an entire section of his claim to 'INCENTIVES', which consisted of a legal document drafted by a number of disaffected persons, who used a number of statutes and proclamations to show why they remained loyal to Britain. The section began with a statute of the Tudor monarch Henry VII, which stated that 'it is against all law and good conscience, that such subjects, attending upon such service [against rebellions], should suffer for doing their true duty of allegiance.'[127] Appealing as British subjects, the claimants argued that 'allegiance and protection are reciprocal duties: he hopeth for protection from the crown; and he payeth his allegiance to it in the person of him whom he seeth in peaceable possession of it'.[128] These themes continued with long quotations from a number of documents: Parliament's decree that anyone who supported the Stamp Act would be guaranteed '*protection and favour*', the King's Proclamation of Rebellion in 1775, and the Treaty of Paris.[129] The petitioners also

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[122] Memorial of Richard Jolliffe, *Ibid*. (NA, London), AO Series 13, Volume 26, f. 202.
[123] *Ibid*.
[124] *Ibid*.
[125] *Ibid*.
[126] Joseph Galloway, *The Claim of the American Loyalists Reviewed and Maintained Upon Incontrovertible Principles of Law and Justice* (London, 1788), p. 114.
[127] Collections with regard to the Case of the American Loyalists, in Parker Papers (LRO, 920 PAR I), Volume 19, Item 7.
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] *Ibid*.

used Britain's unwritten constitution to further their case. The constitution, they declared, established 'a position which the world admits to be just; that, though the supreme power may relinquish any part of its territory, the individual ought to be indemnified for his consequential loss.'[130] They continued: 'But if citizens, who remain tranquil and inactive aid sedition and insurrection, are…recompensed, what patronage and compensation are due to those British subjects, who, as much from inclination as from promises, support, with their lives and fortunes, the laws; and, at the request of the king and the nation, face rebellion in arms?'[131] The "loyalists" had done their duty and opposed the 'violence of insurgents'.[132] Now the claimants expected the British government to recognise and reward their "loyalism."

Black Persons and White Women Claim their Titles as "Loyalists"

The forty-three Black claimants who appealed to the Commission used the same contractual sentiments.[133] These memorialists did not call themselves "black loyalists" – they just called themselves "loyalists," on equal terms with their white disaffected counterparts[134] There was a reason for that. If an ideal of citizenship was starting to emerge in the United States, then politically marginalised persons also pushed for equal rights in the British Empire.[135] Shadrack Furman, who after a brief stay in Nova Scotia played his fiddle on the streets of London to support his family, claimed his service to Britain as an equal with whites.[136] Furman told the Commission that he was originally a 'free black man' from Accomack County on the Eastern Shore. But in January 1781, the partisans, 'getting Information of his entertaining some of the British Troops…and otherwise Supplying them with Provisions', decided to upend his peaceful life.[137] They 'burnt destroyed or carried away the property of many Loyalists', then they 'Stripped tied up and gave him 500 Lashes and then left him almost dead in the Field'.[138] As a

[130] *Ibid*.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] *Ibid*.
[133] Michael A. McDonnell, '"Other Loyalists": A Reconsideration of the Black Loyalist Experience in the Era of the American Revolution', *Southern Historian* 16 (Spring 1995), p. 6.
[134] The term "black loyalist" is overused in scholarship. See, for instance, Christopher Curry, *Freedom and Resistance: A Social History of Black Loyalists in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017); Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*; and Rachel B. Herrmann, 'Rebellion or riot?: black Loyalist food laws in Sierra Leone', *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 4 (2016), pp. 1-24.
[135] Christopher A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), p. 95.
[136] Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, pp. 79-80.
[137] Petition of Shadrack Furman, in American Loyalist Claims (NA, London), AO Series 13, Volume 29, ff. 658-659.
[138] *Ibid*.

result of his treatment, he lost 'his Eye Sight, and the use of one of his Legs by a stroke of an axe they gave him'.[139] Despite losing his home, livelihood, and physical mobility, he joined the 'Royal Army' and 'was Instrumental in taking Caleb Tigel and one Rose two notorious Rebels who had known to come as Spies to Portsmouth under the Disguise of Friendship'.[140] Furman was not the only person to tell war stories. Peter Anderson, a free black sawyer from Norfolk, did not call himself a "loyalist," but he made a claim before the Commission and so may have considered himself worthy of that title. He declared that he was 'pressed into the Land Service under Capt. FORDYCE Lord Dunmore Commander. in Chief' where he fought until Fordyce was killed and he was imprisoned.[141] As a result of joining, he said he 'Lost all I had in the world' and was 'Confin'd about six Months' in prison, and for the 'Other six Months he liv'd in the Woods'.[142] Unfortunately, his claim that was dismissed by the Commission as 'a very incredible Story.'[143] The commissioners believed him to be an enslaved person. Freedom, to the British, was the only reward for his service in the conflict.[144]

Using the political status of their deceased husbands, the widows of "loyalists" also claimed for reward from the British government. As we saw in the last chapter, kinship ties were often used against women, like Mary Willing Byrd, to tie them to one cause or another. But these links could also be useful. Jane Thompson, the widow of Talbot Thompson, a Norfolk sailmaker, declared that her husband 'was a loyalist', and that he willingly served in one of Dunmore's regiments along with their 'negroe taken by Col. Byrd to man the works at the Great Bridge' (a man who now resided in freedom at Shelburne).[145] She recounted that they were both 'obliged to abandon [the town after its destruction] and to join Lord Dunmore in the year 1776.'[146] After the war, without her house or goods, which were 'lost in the general conflagration', Thompson gave her claim in Shelburne because she had no friends in England.[147] Chretia Weeks, the wife of Ralph Weeks, also used her husband's status as a "loyalist" to claim compensation. After leaving Norfolk with Dunmore, 'Her Husband & son continued in His Majesty's service [the former as a sergeant in the Black Company of Labourers] until his death which was in New York in 1783 and left your memorialist in the

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139 *Ibid*.
140 *Ibid*.
141 Petition of Peter Anderson, in *Ibid*. (NA, London), AO Series 13, Volume 27, f. 226.
142 *Ibid*., f. 230.
143 Decision on Peter Anderson's Claim, *Ibid*. (NA, London), AO Series 12, Volume 99, f. 354.
144 *Ibid*.
145 Memorial of Jane Thompson, in *Ibid*. (NA, London), AO Series 13, Volume 25, f. 481 ('loyalist'); Claim for a Black Man, *Ibid*., f. 485 ('negroe').
146 Memorial, in *Ibid*., f. 481.
147 *Ibid*. ('lost'); Sworn Statement by Jane Thompson, *Ibid*., f. 484 ("no friends").

greatest distress.'[148] With no one to assist her, and 'knowing that she could no long[er] stay in New York Because of the Americans and being destitute', she was forced to make a claim.[149] Eventually, the Commissioners heard 3,225 claims in England and Canada, and just over three million pounds sterling was dispensed.[150] Yet these women received significantly less than men. Mary Beth Norton estimates that thirty-four per cent of women made successful claims compared to a success rate of thirty-nine per cent for men.[151] The underpayment of women was due, Norton argues, to the lack of social connections these Virginians were able to bring to bear.[152] Another reason for their exclusion may have been that kinship ties only went so far in proving one's merits as a "loyalist."

Britain Forgets the "Loyalists"

Unfortunately for these claimants, the commission took place as some Britons reconciled themselves to the Revolution. Though Britain's memory of the "American War" receives little attention in the historiography, this conflict was increasingly remembered in London as a heroic failure – 'a war', the pamphleteer Baptist Noel Turner declared, 'more truly glorious than any thing [the former French king] Lewis XIV could boast of.'[153] The British, many argued, had suffered 29,000 casualties in an imperial war against a coalition of European enemies – a conflict that France had started.[154] 'Long before the breaking out of the war between Great-Britain and France, in one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five', the historian John Andrews wrote in 1785, 'the French had at various times entertained ideas of effecting a

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148 Memorial of Chretia Weeks, in *Ibid*., Volume 107., f. 271.
149 *Ibid*.
150 Wilmot, *Historical View*, pp. 90-91. Forty one merchants alone claimed over three million pounds. (Sales of British Property Confiscated and sold in the Borough and County of Norfolk in Virginia began August 8th, 1780, American Loyalist Claims [NA, London], AO Series 13, Volume 28, ff. 340-341.)
151 Mary Beth Norton, 'Eighteenth-Century Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists', *William and Mary Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (July 1976), p. 394.
152 *Ibid*., pp. 399-400.
153 Baptist Noel Turner, *The True Alarm* (London, 1783), p. 4. See Colley, *Britons*, pp. 144-145. Troy Bickham notes that 'when the war ended, the British did not behave like a defeated people, a point that has long intrigued, if not baffled, historians.' ('Review: Andrew Jackson O'Shaugnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of Empire*', *American Historical Review* 119, no. 4 [October 2014], p. 1355.) Britain's memory of the Revolution is also not explored in Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006). For a study that acknowledges the importance of "heroic failure" to British identity (yet does not discuss the Revolution as such an event), see Stephanie Barczewski, *Heroic Failure and the British* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).
154 Peckham, ed., *Toll of Independence*, p. xi.

separation between the English and their American Colonies.'[155] And 'the effects produced by the machinations of the French', he continued, 'were precisely such as they had intended and expected. The disposition of the inhabitants of North America began gradually to alter from that warmth of attachment to the mother-country, which had so peculiarly characterized them.'[156] Andrews titled his work: *History of the War with America, France, Spain, and Holland*. His association of the "American War" with these four nations, the 'Four Confederates' as they were called, was an example of Britain trying to obtain moral capital from a disastrous conflict.[157] It was Britain against the world – and Britons enjoyed playing the underdog. Another commentator pushed this theme of heroic failure even further, and argued in 1786 that 'In the late American war, it is now, at last, evident the scheme of the French and Spanish monarchs was to diminish the power of England, which to them grew formidable, and not to invade her; if they can *gradually*, and at no risqué of *draining* their coffers, cut away *her* arms …seize on her *body*, and impose on her any *head* they please, - perhaps a *Dutch pedlar!*'[158] The "loyalists" stood very little chance in these British attempts to shift the narrative. John Andrews only used the word "Loyalist" or "Provincial Loyalist" three times in the second volume of his history, and the partisans escaped being labelled "rebels."[159] Andrews instead turned the war into a party contest between "whigs" and "tories."[160] The "loyalists" were the main casualty of a nation determined to forgive and forget.[161]

To add insult to injury, some Britons reconstructed an epithet that had once been used by the partisans in the crisis: "British American." Though Mary Beth Norton uses this epithet as the title for her book on the exiles, it seems that the British, and not the disaffected, reconstructed this term after the war.[162] Government officials, such as Thomas Pownall, who originally supported a federal empire on similar terms to the original "British Americans" in the imperial crisis, yearned for a world that was now lost. Pownall wrote a memorial, published in 1784, which hoped for a 'firm alliance hereafter in a Family Compact; by which Britons,

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[155] John Andrews, *History of the War with America, France, Spain, and Holland; commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783*, vol. 1 (London, 1785), p. 17.
[156] *Ibid*., p. 21.
[157] Conway, 'Fellow-Nationals to Foreigners', p. 99.
[158] M. Beaty, *The monitor: or, an address to the people of Great Britain, America, and Ireland, on the present situation of affairs* (London, 1786), p. 44.
[159] Andrews, *History of the War*, vol. 2, p. 363 and 398.
[160] *Ibid*., p. 24.
[161] Holger Hoock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750-1850* (London: Profile Books, 2010), p. 55.
[162] Norton, *British Americans*. For another historian referring to disaffected persons as "British Americans," see Philip Gould, *Writing the Rebellion: Loyalists and the Literature of Politics in British America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 23.

and British Americans united, might once more become, on a more extended basis, the great and glorious Nation they once were.'[163] The usage of "British American" could even be heard from the pulpit in sermons celebrating the conclusion of the conflict. In the same year as Pownall's memorial, George Gaskin, a lecturer in the parish of Islington in London, remonstrated with the former colonists for their choice of allies. 'That the ancient enemies of England, the French, should take advantage of our domestic differences, and commence hostilities, we are not to wonder', he declared, 'but that British Americans should make alliances with so perfidious a nation…was really of amazement'.[164] Yet Gaskin hoped that the partisans 'may discover cause to repent of the rash connexion.'[165] Using similar terms, another parishioner noted that the 'British Americans in the West' would be the 'instruments of Providence to extend both the name [of God], and all it's blessings, over the whole globe.'[166] Far from being attacked, the new republic was celebrated for its commitment to British models of government. The *Derby Mercury*, for example, noted that the laws were 'founded in general on British Laws' conforming to 'the new Appearance of things which the Revolution produced.'[167] Britons highlighted the "British Americans'" imitation of their systems of government as the sincerest form of flattery. Whilst these views had been ignored in the imperial crisis, the British, struggling to find allies after a tumultuous war, now found reasons to forgive their former "British American" foes.

The Partisans' Many Approaches to "Loyalism"

The partisans were not always receptive to these British overtures. As with the epithet "refugee," they used Britain's lack of support for the "loyalists" to further attack the Empire. Figure 28 suggests a bump in usage of "loyalist" around 1783. This shift may have been due to the fact that many newspapers carried reports that reflected badly on Britain's treatment of their allies. The support of some former colonists for the "loyalists,'' therefore, was sometimes another way to reinforce the image of a callous British government prosecuting a destructive civil war and then leaving the "loyalists" in the cold. One paper carried a supposed intelligence

[163] Thomas Pownall, *Three Memorials Most Humbly Addressed to the Sovereigns of Europe, Great Britain, and North America* (London, 1784), p. 13.
[164] George Gaskin, *The Lord our Deliverer. A Sermon Preached in the Parish Churches of Mepal and Sutton, in the Diocese of Ely, on Thursday, July 29, 1784* (London, 1784), p. 9.
[165] *Ibid*.
[166] George Walker, *The Doctrine of A Providence, Illustrated and Applied in a Sermon, Preached to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Nottingham, July 29, 1784; Being the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving on the Conclusion of the Late Destructive War* (London, 1784), p. 22.
[167] Bickham, *Making Headlines*, p. 244.

report from a British officer in Charleston, who was supervising the evacuation of that city on 14 December 1782. 'The poor unhappy loyalists', the officer apparently wrote, 'whom the British government not many months before, had mostly solemnly pledged its faith to protect in their persons and properties, were now to be left victims to their merciless enemies…and to suffer every species of indigence and want in a strange land.'[168] The British soldier noted that many preferred 'the risque of immediate death' to siding with a 'government, whose…treachery stands unparalleled in the annals of history.'[169] This report did not tell the whole story. Those persons who left the British were running away from the violence that had broken out throughout the south. One diarist noted that disaffected persons had run away to the British because they 'enjoyed real protection & [it] was safe to go to sleep without [the] danger of having his [or her] throat cut before morning.'[170] By omitting the partisans' crimes on the ground, this newspaper ensured that "loyalist" would become a byword for British betrayal. But the partisans were not done. On arriving in the West Indies, where many disaffected persons sought refuge after leaving Charleston, reports travelled as far as Massachusetts that Britain had again betrayed the "loyalists."[171] Short of subsistence and land, those seeking refuge were forced onto property 'parts of which had been cleared but abandoned for the want of funds to prosecute their cultivation'.[172] Like "refugee," the partisans' view of disaffected persons as "unfortunate," "unhappy," and "poor" stripped these women, men, and children of their agency. Caught on the winds of change, many partisans argued, these "loyalists" had chosen the treacherous arms of Great Britain.

Unlike these more sympathetic views with regards to the "loyalists," Benjamin Franklin had a different view entirely. He believed that the disaffected did not merit their titles as "loyalists." For him, the conflict was a personal affair. His disinherited son William was the royal governor of New Jersey and the director of the "Board of Associated Loyalists."[173] Possibly with these filial animosities in mind, Franklin argued that the partisans' conduct towards the 'Loyalists (as they call themselves)' had been just given the circumstances.[174] The partisans, he thundered in his June 1786 letter, have had their houses, farms, and towns 'so

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168 'Letter from a British officer in Charleston', in *Pennsylvania Packet*, 6 May 1783.
169 *Ibid*.
170 'Robert Gray: Observations on the War in Carolina', May 1780 to February 1782, in Rhodehamel, ed., *Writings from the War*, p. 756.
171 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, pp. 215-243.
172 *Massachusetts Centinel*, 12 January 1785.
173 Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 223-224.
174 Benjamin Franklin to Francis Maseres, 26 June 1786, in Albert Henry Smith, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 9 (New York and London: The Macmillan Company, 1906), p. 348. My thanks to Emily Yankowitz for this reference.

lately destroyed, and relations scalped under the conduct of these royalists'.[175] Now, Franklin noted, these aggrieved people wanted retribution. There was no reason to accept "tories" 'owing to a firm persuasion, that there could be no reliance on their oaths'.[176] Using history as his guide for treating traitors, he suggested that the English Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell had collapsed in 1660 because it was intent on 'restoring the estates of the royalists after their being subdued'.[177] If those properties had not been restored and 'their persons had been banished', he declared, 'they could not have so much contributed to the restoration of kingly power'.[178] It was right and proper that the properties of the disaffected should be seized given that 'one great motive to the loyalty of the royalists was the hope of sharing in these [British] confiscations [of partisan property].'[179] Having justified confiscating "loyalist" property, Franklin confiscated their titles as "loyalists." 'I have hinted above', he declared, 'that the name *loyalist* was improperly assumed by these people. *Royalists* they may perhaps be called.'[180] Instead, the 'true *loyalists* were the people of America, against whom they [the disaffected] acted. No people were ever known more truly loyal, and universally so, to their sovereigns.'[181] To him, "American Loyalists" was a contradiction in terms. Franklin continued to argue, as his fellow colonists had done in the imperial crisis, that the partisans were the true "loyalists" in the struggle against Britain and her allies.

Citizen

The Partisans Restrict "Citizen" to White Partisans

Franklin was not speaking from a position of confidence though. In a country close to economic collapse and riven with internal disagreements, the partisans reconstructed the term "citizen" – they redefined who was worthy and unworthy of this title – in order to ensure that only meritorious white persons could claim their citizenship in the United States. That principle, and the war over words that reflected their betrayal of Indians and black persons, underpinned the explosion in usage of "citizen" that can be seen in Figure 29. As the petitioners of Caroline County noted in 1783, one's 'admission to citizenship is a matter of favour, and not of right.'[182]

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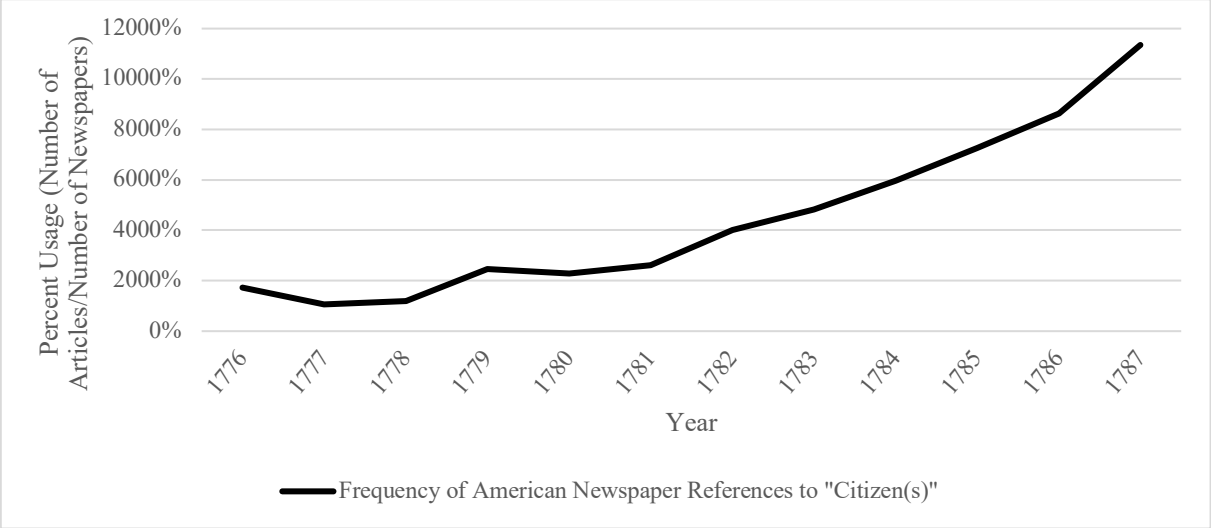
[175] *Ibid*.
[176] *Ibid*.
[177] *Ibid*., pp. 348-349.
[178] *Ibid*., p. 349.
[179] *Ibid*.
[180] *Ibid*., p. 350.
[181] *Ibid*.
[182] 'Caroline County, Virginia, Petition', in *Royal Gazette*, 15 November 1783.

'Because men', they maintained, 'whose principles are notoriously averse to the present establishment, can never become sound props to support it.'[183] Besides cementing merit and not birthright as the key principle underpinning who could be called a "citizen," the partisans continued to be concerned with how to bring thirteen states together into one nation. To many political figures, renewing the bonds of citizenship was the answer. Seeing the potential for political dismemberment, Thomas Paine declared in 1783: 'Our citizenship in the United States is our national character. Our citizenship in any particular state is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home, by the former to the world. Our great title is AMERICANS'.[184] This struggle was no less important in Virginia. George Washington, in particular, was worried about the mass migration of colonists to the west, many of whom were inspired by lower land prices and taxation, and the potential of these inhabitants to fall into the orbit of the British Empire.[185] Washington argued that America had to bind these 'New States…by interest, the only cement that will bind' and provide incentives which would 'make it cheaper for them to bring the product of their labour to our Markets, instead of carrying them to the Spaniards Southwardly, or the British Northwardly'.[186] Without such incentives, the western colonists, Washington worried, would 'be quite a distinct People, and ultimately may be very troublesome neighbours to us'.[187] The possibility that white Virginians would not choose their titles as "citizens" was anathema to Washington.



[183] *Ibid*.
[184] Thomas Paine, *The Last Crisis: Number XIII*, 19 April 1783, in Foner, ed., *Paine*, pp. 352-353.
[185] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 482 ("migration"); Griffin, *American Leviathan*, p. 186 ("orbit").
[186] George Washington to James Warren, 7 October 1785, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Confederation Series*, p. 300.
[187] *Ibid*.

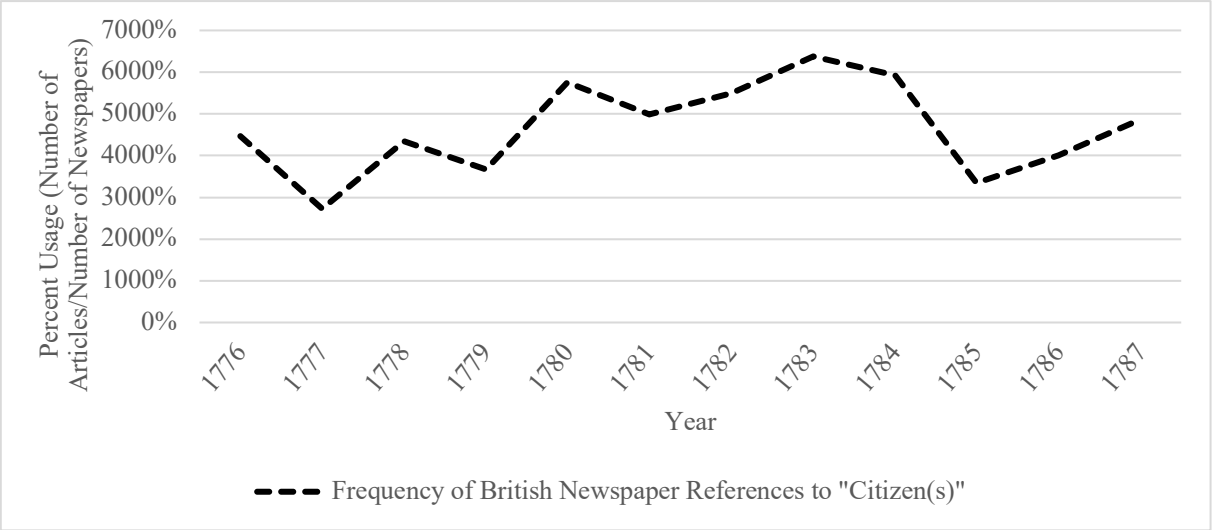


Figure 29: Frequency of American and British Newspaper References to "Citizen(s)," 1776-87.

There was another reason why the former general was so worried: Britons wanted to make "subject" a more desired title than "citizen." To that end, Marilyn Baseler argues that many Britons depicted the United States as a 'land of social chaos, economic depression, and political licentiousness' in order to stop their former colonists from seducing 'British subjects from their homeland and natural allegiance.'[188] This was done through a number of means. First, British officials treated America as 'a foreign country' of competitors to Britain's continued pre-eminence in the North America trade.[189] 'By asserting their independence', Sheffield declared, 'the Americans have renounced the privileges as well as the duties of British subjects.'[190] Due to these policies, the United States lost well over half of all its trade with England, lost its imperial bounties on indigo, and had bounties placed on its whale exports.[191] These officials did not just attack America's trade though. In order to make subjecthood seem like a better option than citizenship, they also targeted that nation's slaveholders. On 30 June 1779, Henry Clinton had issued the Phillipsburg Proclamation, which extended Dunmore's Proclamation and handed freedom and protection to all servants and enslaved persons, particularly those who had served in British arms.[192] Some intended to

[188] Marilyn C. Baseler, *"Asylum for Mankind": America, 1607-1800* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 172.
[189] Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1969), p. 18.
[190] Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic*, p. 103.
[191] Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'American Incomes Before and After the Revolution', *Journal of Economic History* 73, no. 3 (September 2013), p. 754.
[192] Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, 'Arming Slaves in the American Revolution', in Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 189-190.

honour that pledge. In multiple memoranda, the British general Sir Guy Carleton argued that enslaved runaways were '*equal to Emancipation*' as '*British subjects*'.[193] His emancipation of black persons was legal, he argued, because the British constitution did not allow slavery. Instead, it held 'out *Freedom* and *Protection* to *all* who came *within* and claimed its *Protection*'.[194] The evacuation of over three thousand free and formerly enslaved persons, many of whom were entered into Carleton's *Book of Negroes*, was partly a sign to black persons that they were much better off being British subjects than claiming their status from America's slaveholders as "citizens."[195]

Whilst the United States was being pressured by Britain, the partisans tried to maintain stability at home by restricting the title "citizen" to particular persons. The Congress ensured that the Continental Army and militia veterans would receive their rewards as the most meritorious "citizens." The Virginian officer Theodorick Bland wrote to Washington that these soldiers were unquestionably the 'most meritorious Class of Citizens in this long & at length, Successful contest.'[196] The question of who constituted the most meritorious class of "citizens" was, however, a cause of conflict. Founded in May 1783, and named after the Roman dictator Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, the Society of the Cincinnati, a hereditary order of Continental Army officers, seemed anathema to the principle of merit.[197] The South Carolina politician Aedanus Burke attacked this Society's aristocratic pretensions. Appealing to his 'fellow citizens', Burke denounced the Cincinnati in the title of his pamphlet as a '*race of hereditary patricians or nobility*'.[198] To consider oneself as 'distinct from the rest of society' because of one's birth, he wrote, contradicted the 'revolution in America', which had overturned the 'orders, titles and trumpery we have been used to under the royal government' where virtue and ability were 'not such objects of reverence as a star or ribbon.'[199] He concluded his remarks by insisting that 'if there be among my readers one, who merits the name of a republican, I have the confidence to believe his opinion will go along with mine.'[200] Despite the protestations of Cincinnati members, such as the Pennsylvanian Stephen Moylan, that 'distinctions…are the

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[193] Negroes, in Correspondence, Original – Secretary of State, Dispatches and Miscellaneous (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 8, f. 86 ('*emancipation*') and 87 ('*Subjects*').
[194] Precis relative to Negroes in North America, in *Ibid*., f. 113.
[195] Brown, *Moral Capital*, p. 27.
[196] Theodorick Bland to George Washington, 16 April 1783, in Smith et al, eds., *Letters of Delegates*, p. 187.
[197] Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*, p. 86.
[198] Aedanus Burke, *Considerations on the Society or Order of the Cincinnati; lately instituted by the major-generals, brigadier-generals, and other officers of the American army. Proving that it creates a race of hereditary patricians or nobility* (Charleston, 1783), p. 2 ('fellow') and title ('*race*').
[199] *Ibid*., p. 6 ('distinct') and 7 ('revolution').
[200] *Ibid*., p. 14.

rewards of merit' and that the '*uncommon merit of the officers*' had made them particularly meritorious "citizens," Burke's pamphlet was popular.[201] In the southern counties of Virginia, the inhabitants unseated any politician who dared to join the Cincinnati.[202] Those who had actively participated as soldiers in the war were determined that the epithet "citizen" should only go to those who had deserved it.

Virginian slaveholders, many of whom had also fought in the war, also defined themselves as the most meritorious class of "citizens."[203] To understand why slaveholders would petition their own government as "citizens," one must first understand that slavery in the Old Dominion had spread following the war. As a result of the new practice of hiring out slaves to different properties (which expanded the opportunities for landless and tenant farmers to be slaveholders), and the migration of white persons to the western counties (which increased the proportion of enslaved people in the east), ordinary and middling Virginians now had a personal stake in the system.[204] If, as Sylvia Frey argues, the war 'rocked the slave system to its foundations', slaveholders pointedly used their service in that conflict to argue for the maintenance of slavery.[205] The controversy started with Virginia's new manumission rules. Enacted in 1782 and 1783, these laws gave slaveholders the right to free their human property, and freed enslaved substitutes who had served in the war.[206] Many slaveholders had little intention of permitting these acts. The petitions of 1,200 proslavery Virginians used the Revolution against the abolitionists, who they believed were the 'Enemies of our Country, [and] Tools of the British Administration'.[207] They declared that the Revolution against Britain and the "citizen's" inherent right to property – as 'valuable Citizens', 'oppressed Citizen[s]', 'fellow Citizens', and 'free Citizens' – justified their continued ownership of other human

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[201] Stephen Moylan, *Observations on a late pamphlet, entitled, "Considerations upon the Society or Order of the Cincinnati," Clearly Evincing the Innocence and Propriety of that Honourable and Respectable Institution* (Philadelphia, 1783), p. 21 ('rewards') and 25 ('*uncommon*').

[202] Edmund Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, 24 April 1784, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7, p. 116.

[203] Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty*, p. 119. For the long, intertwined history of slavery and Anglicanism in Virginia, see Michael Anesko, 'So Discreet a Zeal: Slavery and the Anglican Church in Virginia, 1680-1730', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 93, no. 3 (July 1985), pp. 247-278.

[204] Sarah S. Hughes, 'Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782 to 1810', *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978), p. 286 ("hiring out"); McDonnell, *Politics of War*, p. 485 ("migration").

[205] Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 326. See also Gary B. Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 70-71; Tomlins, *Freedom Bound*, pp. 410-411; and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [1975]), ch. 4.

[206] McDonnell, *Politics of War*, pp. 487-489.

[207] The Remonstrance and Petition of the Free Inhabitants of Halifax County, 29 November 1785, in Frederika Teute Schmidt and Barbara Ripel Wilhelm, 'Early Proslavery Petitions in Virginia', *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (January 1973), p. 145.

beings.[208] 'When the British Parliament usurped a Right to dispose of our Property without our Consent', one petition read, 'we dissolved the Union with our Parent Country, and established a Constitution and Form of Government of our own, that our Property might be secure in Future.'[209] They had risked 'our Lives and Fortunes, and waded through Seas of Blood.'[210] The continued practice of plantation slavery, these Virginians argued, was sealed with the blood and meritorious service of slaveholder "citizens."

The Partisans Target Non- "Citizens"

These slaveholders and soldiers had a firm idea of who should be known as "citizens," but they also made sure to highlight who was undeserving of this status. The first group to be targeted were disaffected persons who remained in Virginia, many of whom were cast as "tories." Virginia's political class justified their acts against the "tories" by stating that they were protecting "citizens" from harm and "republican" liberty from being undermined.[211] On 15 June 1782, the Virginia General Court sentenced three men, John Caton, Joshua Hopkins, and James Lamb, to death for treason. Following the sentence, the three men hurriedly petitioned the House of Delegates for clemency. The House accepted the plea but, in a setback for the prisoners, the Senate refused. In the end, the prisoners were spared the hangman's noose in an appeal to Virginia's highest court, the Court of Appeals, but they lost their bid for freedom.[212] The jurist St. George Tucker justified the prisoners' continued imprisonment because Virginia's constitution, in contrast to the British model, 'was framed with all the solemnity of an original Compact between the Citizens about to establish a Government most agreeable to themselves.'[213] Edmund Pendleton, the presiding judge in the trial, noted that this 'Compact' proved the laws were originally 'calculated to maintain the rights of private citizens, and the

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[208] The Remonstrance and Petition of the Free Inhabitants of Lunenburg County, 29 November 1785, in *Ibid*., p. 141 ('valuable', 'oppressed', and 'fellow') and 143 ('free').

[209] The Remonstrance and Petition of the Free Inhabitants of Halifax County, 10 November 1785, in *Ibid*., p. 145.

[210] *Ibid*.

[211] For the law as a tool for protecting "republican" liberty, see Morton J. Horowitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), ch. 1; A. G. Roeber, *Faithful Magistrates and Republican Lawyers: Creators of Virginia Legal Culture, 1680-1810* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), ch. 5; and Jessica K. Lowe, 'Guarding Republican Liberty: St. George Tucker and Judging in Federal Virginia', in Sally E. Hadden and Patricia Hagler Minter, eds., *Signposts: New Directions in Southern Legal History* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2013), pp. 111-133.

[212] William Michael Treanor, 'Case of the Prisoners and the Origins of Judicial Review', *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 143 (1994), pp. 491-570.

[213] Notes of Oral Argument in the *Case of the Prisoners*, in Tucker-Coleman Papers (Swem Library, Williamsburg, 40 T79), ff. 8-9.

integrity of the state.'[214] These goals of 'rights' and 'integrity', he declared, would hardly be promoted by 'letting loose notorious offenders to burn, to rob, and to murder, or to aid a foreign foe in his unjust attempts upon the liberties of the country? Mercy…would be cruelty to the rest.'[215] To turn loose dangerous offenders upon the community of 'Virtuous Citizens' was directly contrary to the principles of the constitution and the 'late Revolution'.[216] As they had done with Norfolk and Portsmouth, the Virginian partisans used the defense of "citizens'" property to justify their persecutory treatment of former friends and neighbours with whom they had much in common.

Despite this legal philosophy of persecution, the partisans' attacks on "tories," as persons undeserving of the title "citizens," was contested throughout the United States. On the question of reintegration, politics was split between two contrasting principles: that "citizens" needed to be protected from the disaffected, and, in contrast, that the supposed "tories" were fully deserving of the rights of citizenship.[217] Those who took the latter view continued to blame Britain for the war and its most extreme forms of violence. Echoing Jefferson's letter to Philip Turpin (featured at the start of this chapter), the New York representative Alexander Hamilton argued that a tough approach to reintegration would lead to a mass migration of human and economic capital from the new nation. Hamilton supported the enforcement of the Treaty of Paris, which guaranteed America's internal enemies equal treatment under the law, an end to property confiscations, and the cessation of state policies protecting debtors from prosecution.[218] Hamilton tried in vain to convince the state assemblies, who still referred to the disaffected as 'parricides', to follow the Treaty's stipulations as well.[219] To that end, he addressed New York's 'Considerate Citizens', the 'best citizens' and the 'true friends of the Revolution', who, he believed, opposed the extrajudicial actions of 'pretended whig[s]'.[220]

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[214] *Ibid*. ('Compact'); Commonwealth v. Caton & et al., in David Call, ed., *Reports of Cases Argued and Decided in the Court of Appeals of Virginia*, vol. 4 (Richmond, 1833), p. 18 ('private').

[215] *Ibid*.

[216] Pendleton's Account of the "Case of the Prisoners," 29 October 1782, in Mays, ed., *Edmund Pendleton*, p. 423.

[217] These arguments were dependent on the idea that reasonableness should determine who can make political decisions. For more on this issue, see Sophia Rosenfeld, 'Benjamin Rush's Common Sense', *Early American Studies* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2017), p. 253; and Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law, and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 148.

[218] 'Paris Peace Treaty', *Avalon*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp>, accessed 15 September 2018.

[219] Extract of the Resolutions of the County of Essex in the State of New Jersey, 19 May 1783, in Correspondence, Original – Secretary of State (NA, London), CO Series 5, Volume 8, f. 422.

[220] A Letter from "Phocion" to the Considerate Citizens of New York, 1-27 January 1784, in Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke, eds., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 3 (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 494 ('Considerate Citizens' and 'best citizens); Second Letter from "Phocion," April 1784, in *Ibid*., p. 531 ('true friends of the Revolution') and 545 ('pretended whig'). Hamilton was not the only person to make such arguments in favour of reintegration, particularly that of Quakers. See also

Hamilton declared that those who did not possess a "considerate" opinion on reintegration – in other words, his opinion – should not be trusted with political power. In a tactical move, Hamilton redefined the term 'real British subjects', which was used by America's commissioners to exclude the disaffected from their rights to property, to instead mean British natives, such as Clinton and Dunmore, who had prosecuted the war.[221] In contrast to these native Britons, Hamilton steadfastly believed that the "tories" were worthy "citizens" who could not be 'deprived of any right which the citizens in general are entitled to, unless forfeited by some offence.'[222] He was willing to extend the rights of citizenship to all white persons who did not bear the United States any harm.

Hamilton's extension of the title "citizens" to white people, though, only included men. Nothing had changed, then, since the war ended. Citizenship continued to be defined as a male prerogative. Linda Kerber has shown that white women's calls for citizenship in this period were largely based on their wartime service.[223] Abigail Adams, one of the more prominent proponents of this idea, then, was supported by many other women. In a letter to her husband in June 1782, Adams highlighted the 'patriotick virtue' that women had displayed in the war.[224] 'Patriotism in the female Sex', she declared, 'is the most disinterested of all virtues. Excluded from honours and from offices, we cannot attach ourselves to the State or Government from having held a place of Eminence.' [225] Like Hannah Corbin in the previous chapter, Adams protested women's exclusion from having a 'voice in Legislation' and being 'obliged to submit to those Laws which are imposed on us even though all History and every age exhibit Instances of patriotick virtue in the female Sex…[that] equals the most Heroick of yours.'[226] Without any attachment to the 'public welfare,' Adams noted it was even more meritorious of many women to join in with the cause. Men could expect benefits and applause for their service, but women could expect neither. She noted, in reference to the French poet Antoine Leonard Thomas, who sought to define women's roles with respect to men, that 'as Citizens we are call[e]d upon to exhibit our fortitude, for when you offer your Blood to the State, it is ours. In giving it [to] our

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Benjamin Rush, *Considerations upon the Present Test-Law of Pennsylvania: Addressed to the Legislature and Freemen of the State* (Philadelphia, 1784).

221 Second Letter from "Phocion," April 1784, in Syrett and Cooke, eds., *Alexander Hamilton*, pp. 536-537.

222 A Letter from "Phocion," 1-27 January 1784, in *Ibid* p. 488.

223 Linda K. Kerber, '"I Have Don…much to Carrey on the Warr": Women and the Shaping of Republican Ideology after the American Revolution', in *idem*., *Toward an Intellectual History of Women: Essays by Linda K. Kerber* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 100.

224 Abigail Adams to John Adams, with a List of Articles wanted from Holland, 17 June 1782, in Butterfield and Friedlaender, eds., *Adams Family*, vol. 4, p. 328.

225 *Ibid*.

226 *Ibid*.

Sons and Husbands we give more than ourselves. You can only die on the field of Battle, but we have the misfortune to survive those whom we Love most.'[227] The force of the sentiments expressed in this letter was not felt through any policy change in Massachusetts or the other states. Though Kerber has described the early republic as 'Thermidorean', a moment of reaction when gender roles were constrained, this exclusionary process was already in place before the Philadelphia Convention in May 1787.[228]

Besides white women, the male partisans also excluded African-descended persons, whether free or enslaved, from the rights of citizenship. Instead of gratitude for their military service, black persons were treated as aliens in their own country. One reason for their exclusion as "citizens" was that Virginians feared that an alliance of British soldiers, enslaved persons, and disaffected whites would wreak havoc in the Old Dominion. In May 1782, the Maryland planter Colonel George Corbin feared that '"blood plots" [had been] formed by…the tories, British and negroes, who had prepared themselves "*with ropes as instruments of death*" and "*had marked their devoted victims*"'.[229] In response, Virginians used the court system to strengthen definitions of enslaved deviancy and criminality.[230] For slaveholders as well as "tory" persecutors, then, the law was an instrument of power that ensured the planter class would never be challenged as it had been during the war, when over six thousand enslaved persons from Virginia and Maryland had joined the British side.[231] The South Carolina congressman David Ramsay took these legal definitions as step further. In a 1789 pamphlet he declared that 'the political character of the people was also changed [by independence] from subjects to citizens.'[232] On one side, he argued, stood "subjects," who were '*under* the power of another'.[233] '[B]ut a citizen', he wrote, 'is an *unit* of a mass of free people, who, collectively, possess sovereignty.'[234] Ramsay determined that black persons merited neither "subjecthood" nor "citizenship." 'Negroes are inhabitants', he argued, 'but not citizens. Citizenship confers a right of voting at elections, and many other privileges not enjoyed by those who are no more than inhabitants.'[235] The label "inhabitants" was not an established legal term of exclusion in

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[227] *Ibid*. On Thomas, see Natasha Lee, 'Sex in Translation: Antoine Léonard Thomas's E*ssai sur les femmes* and the Enlightenment Debate on Women', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 4 (Summer 2014), pp. 389-405.
[228] Kerber, 'Massachusetts', p. 378.
[229] Colonel George Corbin to Colonel Davies, 2 May 1782, in Palmer, ed., *Calendar*, vol. 3, p. 149.
[230] Philip J. Schwartz, 'Gabriel's Challenge: Slaves and Crime in Late Eighteenth-Century Virginia', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 90, no. 3 (July 1982), pp. 299-300.
[231] Pybus, 'Jefferson's Faulty Math', p. 258.
[232] David Ramsay, *A Dissertation on the Manner of Acquiring the Character and Privileges of a Citizens of the United States* (Charleston, 1789), p. 3.
[233] *Ibid*.
[234] *Ibid.*
[235] *Ibid.*

the eighteenth century.[236] "Aliens" owed their allegiance to another power, but Ramsay had given enslaved and free black persons no path to becoming "citizens." Locked in legal purgatory as effectively foreign aliens, it would be up to future free black activists to claim that birthright alone gave them enough merit to call themselves "citizens."[237]

Despite also aiding the partisans, the Virginian partisans considered indigenous persons as unworthy of being considered "citizens." The Catawba, Oneida, Tuscarora, Stockbridge, and Wabanaki had honoured their pacts to the white colonisers in the breach. Instead of remembering their service, Washington and other partisans remained fearful that Indian nations posed an existential threat to the United States. As a result, the general treated them as inferiors – as 'friends and subjects to the United States of America', and not as "citizens."[238] Robert Parkinson notes that 'Washington's reference to the Stockbridge as "subjects"…and Congress's description of frontier people as "citizens" reveals a critical fault line, an evolving legal divide that grew out of the common cause [against Britain].'[239] Since the imperial crisis, Indians had been portrayed as persons unworthy of political rights. Now, after the war, these ideas – introduced, in part, by the "Paxton Boys" – were entrenched as native peoples were treated as "aliens": as disenfranchised and dependent individuals. Rather than a moment of triumph, then, the war set the stage for new contests over Indian country. A delegation of 260 Iroquois, Shawnee, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw Indians made clear the war's destructive legacy. In the summer of 1784, they appealed to the Spanish Lieutenant Governor of St. Louis that the conflict was 'the greatest blow that could have been dealt us, unless it had been our total destruction.'[240] Rather than being treated as "friends" and "brothers," the status that the Continental Congress had promised native peoples in July 1775, the 'Americans, a great deal more ambitious and numerous than the English, put us out of our lands…extending themselves like a plague of locusts in the territories of the Ohio River which we inhabit.'[241] The result of this mistreatment, they declared, was 'that today hunger and the impetuous torrent of

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[236] There is no mention of "inhabitant" as a legal term (it was used to refer to someone who dwelled in a location or who was a permanent resident). See 'Inhabitant', *OED*, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/95902?redirectedFrom=inhabitant#eid>, accessed 3 July 2019. There is also no mention of "inhabitant" as a legal term of exclusion in William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

[237] See Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[238] Certificate to the Muhhekunnuk [Stockbridge Mohican] Indians, 8 July 1783, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington: From the Original Manuscript Sources*, vol. 27 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 53.

[239] Parkinson, *Common Cause*, p. 619.

[240] Estevan Miró to Francisco Cruzat, 23 August 1784, Lawrence Kinnard, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 117.

[241] *Ibid*.

war which they impose upon us with other terrible calamities, have brought our villages to a struggle with death.'[242] The damage inflected by Virginians, in particular, proved to many Indian peoples that all "Americans" were indeed "Long Knives."

The Exclusionary Foundations of "Citizen" Come Under Fire

The fact that the partisan leadership had placed walls around who could be called a "citizen" did not mean those forms of institutionalised exclusion remained unchallenged. In contrast to George Washington, the British Methodist leader Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, wanted to extend the title "citizen" to indigenous peoples.[243] The school of thought she represented, that Indian and black persons could be re-educated and "civilised" in order to become "citizens," was becoming more popular in the peace as some political elites in Virginia looked for a solution to the problem of racial integration. Writing to Washington in March 1784, she lamented that 'so little pains have been taken to bring them [Indians] from darkness to light, to make them Christians, and good and useful citizens.'[244] Indigenous peoples were made, not born, as "citizens." Her plan, which was circulated to the governors of North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York, was not free of colonialist instincts. It involved settling white Christian colonists on Indian land. This plan, she declared, would show the partisans' 'attachment to the great Cause of Universal liberty, the glory of their Country, as well as to the precepts of our holy religion & the dictates of humanity.'[245] She believed her scheme was consistent with Revolutionary principles though. 'When one contemplates the Revolution which Providence hath wrought in favor of the American States', she wrote, 'that great Work seems but a prelude to the completion of yet more gracious Purposes of Love to Mankind.'[246] In trying to finish what the partisans had started, Huntingdon was not alone. The Methodist preacher Richard Price, who had supported the partisans since the imperial crisis, wrote to Thomas Jefferson, arguing that that 'American Revolution' would be for nothing if 'the people who have been Struggling so earnestly to save *themselves* from Slavery are ready to enslave *others*'.[247] Price denounced these acts. He argued that 'the friends of liberty and humanity in Europe will be mortify'd, and an event which had raised their hopes will prove

[242] *Ibid*.
[243] Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart*, p. 123.
[244] Countess of Huntingdon to George Washington, c. March 1784, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Confederation Series*, vol. 2, p. 205.
[245] *Ibid*., p. 206.
[246] Lady Huntingdon's Plan for Settlement, 8 April 1784, in *Ibid*., p. 215.
[247] Richard Price to Thomas Jefferson, 2 July 1785, in Boyd et al, eds., *Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, p. 259.

only an introduction to a new Scene of aristocratic tyranny and human debasement.'[248] To Price and Hastings, winning the war did not mean winning the Revolution. To affect radical change, the partisans would have to break down the systems of inequality, including the exclusion of black persons and native peoples from citizenship, that they profited from.

Neither Huntingdon nor Price were the only persons to oppose marginalised peoples' exclusion from the epithet "citizens." Far from unopposed in their persecutions of people for their ethnic background or political opinions, a number of groups used their service in the Revolution to challenge the partisans. Black persons, in particular, used their meritorious service in the war to pursue their rights as "citizens." In David Ramsay's home state of South Carolina, an "Aethiopian" argued in 1783 for the inclusion of black soldiers and enslaved persons as "citizens." Addressing his 'fellow citizens', he encouraged the 'sons of liberty' to 'make every individual a citizen, and they will be your safeguards, bulwarks, and fortifications' against internal and external threats to the nation.[249] He appealed to the soldier's merit as a "citizen." 'The wounded soldier', he wrote, 'who has lost a leg or an arm, or both legs, in the defence of his country, calls loudly for your approbation, and immediate assistance. Dear fellow citizens let not such merit go unrewarded.'[250] The "Atheopian" (or "Ethiopian") used the biblical story of Exodus to show that the colonists' freedom was the result of enslaved persons and free blacks. He highlighted the service of meritorious blacks, such as Crispus Attucks, the stevedore (and part indigenous person) who was killed in the Boston Massacre on 5 March 1770.[251] Casting Attucks as a hero was a radical move considering that John Adams, the lawyer who represented the British soldiers blamed for that event, had blamed Attucks, who had apparently 'undertaken to be the hero of the night' and had exhibited 'mad behaviour', as the cause of the massacre.[252] The "Aethiopian" was not alone in placing his service against the 'haughty sons of Britain' on the same pedestal as the white "sons of liberty."[253] In 1786 the enslaved man James Armistead told the Virginia Assembly of his service to the Marquis de Lafayette. '[A]t the peril of his life he found means to frequent the British Camp' and collect

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[248] *Ibid*. Richard Price also stated these principles in *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution and the means of rendering it a benefit to the World* (London, 1784).
[249] "Aethiopian," *A Sermon on the Evacuation of Charlestown* (Philadelphia, 1783), p. 9 ('fellow') and 15 ('safeguards').
[250] *Ibid*., p. 9.
[251] Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 58.
[252] 'Adams's Argument for the Defence', 3-4 December 1770, *Founders Online*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/05-03-02-0001-0004-0016>, accessed 28 August 2019.
[253] "Aethiopian," *Sermon*, p. 7.

intelligence.[254] Due to his meritorious service, James Armistead secured his freedom and changed his name to James Lafayette.[255] If freedom was defined in this period through resistance to tyranny, as was the case with "patriot," then the "Aethiopian" and James Lafayette had proved through their autonomous conduct that they worthy of being called independent "citizens," and not cast as mere "inhabitants."[256]

Perhaps frustrated with the white partisans' arguments for their continued subservient status, some black persons decided to choose neither their status as "citizens" nor as British subjects. Many of those persons who chose to leave the United States wanted to be independent of European-descended peoples. Since the imperial crisis, British abolitionists had tried to attain moral capital by comparing Britain, the land of liberty, with the United States, which they considered to be a land of slavery. William Thornton, the West Indian Quaker who hoped to establish a 'black commonwealth' in Sierra Leone using freed enslaved persons, tried to communicate this idea to a group of black persons but met resistance.[257] He thought that these black inhabitants would 'continue [as] good subjects' to Britain and 'become proprietors of land, as they thought proper.'[258] Thornton though was surprised that on meeting Rhode Island and Boston's populations of free blacks, he was interrogated on his plans. 'They enjoyed with me the good intention of the English [in resettling them in Africa]', he reported to a friend, 'but are desirous of knowing whether they are to be considered a colony of England, or perfectly independent.'[259] They made their choice quite clear to the British abolitionist. 'If the latter', he continued, 'it will flourish, because many would embark; and if to be dependent on England, none here will engage; for they think that they could alone be happy where there is perfect confidence in their lawgivers, and where their own voices are to be heard.'[260] They had every reason to 'detest a [British] government, which even yet does not consider them as entitled to the common rights of men.'[261] These early proponents of the planned resettlement of free blacks in Africa recognised that anything less than a 'free *Negro settlement*' was unacceptable.[262] If

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[254] 'James Armistead Lafayette's petition to the Virginia Assembly for his freedom', November 1786, *Library of Virginia*, <http://virginiamemory.com/docs/hires/Layfayette_pet_HR.pdf>, accessed 4 September 2018.
[255] Van Buskirk, *Standing in Their Own Light*, p. 187.
[256] Furstenberg, 'Beyond Freedom and Slavery', pp. 1295-1330.
[257] Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 22-23.
[258] William Thornton to John Coakley Lettsom, 18 November 1786, in C. M. Harris and Daniel Preston, eds., *Papers of William Thornton*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1995), pp. 32-33.
[259] William Thornton to John Coakley Lettsom, 15 February 1787, in *Ibid*., p. 43.
[260] *Ibid*.
[261] *Ibid*., pp. 43-44.
[262] William Thornton to John Coakley Lettsom, 26 July 1788, in *Ibid*., p. 71.

the four hundred black persons who arrived in Sierra Leone on 15 May 1787 were going to identify as "British subjects," they duly expected favours and protection in return for their loyalty to the British Empire.[263] The important point for these African-descended persons, however, was that they were going to choose their status.

The idea that black persons had to leave the United States to attain the freedom they deserved as "citizens" seemed wrong to white abolitionists in Virginia and other states. If one group of persons defined themselves as "citizens," that did not give them license to exclude another group as subservient slaves in a free republic. In a 1785 pamphlet addressed to the "Citizens of Virginia," the writer "Juvenis" attacked the 'virtuous citizens of America' for letting the crime of slavery be practiced on their own enslaved "citizens."[264] Emancipation, he argued, demanded 'the attention of every citizen who would wish to be esteemed either virtuous or honest; for honesty does not always consist in a strict adherence to the laws, which are frequently defective in their nature, and in many instances give sanction to the most fraudulent dealings.'[265] His logic was simple: if slavery's laws were contrary to the natural laws to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness defended during the Revolution, then the institution should be abolished. 'Let our conduct', he concluded, 'be always uniformly just as well towards our *own* citizens, as towards those of other nations'.[266] But, just as they argued for black citizenship, the abolitionists' writings were also characterised by their non-use of "citizen." Freedom, they acknowledged, was a human right at birth. It was not a meritorious title to be dispensed by a Virginian planter. 'LIBERTY', a group of petitioners from Virginia argued, was 'the Birthright of Mankind – The Right of every Rational creature without Exception who has not forfeited that Right to the Laws of his Country.'[267] In December 1785, the Virginian Quaker Robert Pleasants took these arguments to George Washington, who was considering emancipating his enslaved workers.[268] He implored Washington to 'Remember the cause for which thou wert cal'd to the Command of the American Army, was the cause of Liberty and the Rights of Mankind'.[269] 'How strange then', he continued, that Washington

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263 Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, ch. 9.
264 "Juvenis," *Observations on the Slavery of the Negroes, in the southern states, particularly intended for the Citizens of Virginia* (New York, 1785), p. 6.
265 *Ibid*.
266 *Ibid*., p. 21.
267 Petition from Frederick and Hampshire Counties, 1786, in J. H. Johnston et al, eds., 'Antislavery Petitions Presented to the Virginia Legislature by Citizens of Various Counties', *Journal of Negro History* 12, no. 4 (October 1927), p. 670.
268 Nash, *Forgotten Fifth*, pp. 99-100.
269 Robert Pleasants to George Washington, 11 December 1785, in Abbot et al, eds., *Washington: Confederation Series*, vol. 3, p. 449.

'should now withhold that inestimable blessing from any who are absolutely in thy power'.[270] Rather than a revitalised land of free "citizens," these abolitionists, like their counterparts in Britain, feared that America was not living up to its principles.

These abolitionists, many of whom were religious dissenters, were emboldened by their own battle for citizenship rights in Virginia. During the war, the dissenters had managed to make being a "republican" synonymous with opposition to Anglicanism. But Anglicans in Virginia, many of whom – such as the Speaker John Tyler and Edmund Pendleton – were in positions of political power, responded by reviving their proposal for a general tax assessment to support Christian ministers.[271] The dissenters and their allies fought back. In response to claims that an established church was necessary to civic virtue, James Madison noted in his June 1785 *Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments* that established religion was one step along the road to a tyrannical government.[272] The body of the text contained an impassioned plea for the "citizen" status of the dissenters. 'We hold this prudent jealousy [of their liberties] to be the first duty of Citizens', his petition read, 'and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution.'[273] The House of Delegates eventually received thirteen copies of his memorial with 1,552 signatures affixed to the document.[274] Madison was not alone in these efforts though. The Baptists themselves appealed to the "Spirit of the Gospel," which forbade religious establishments. Similar to the antislavery case, dissenters appealed to the laws of God, and not just the laws of Virginia, as proof that they were worthy of their titles as "citizens."[275] These "Spirit of the Gospel" petitions, which attained 4,899 signatures, ensured the passage of Thomas Jefferson's Statute of Religious Freedom in 1786.[276] That document balanced both civil rights and natural rights to show that Baptists deserved to be known as "citizens." The Statute declared that 'the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence…is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages, to which, in common with his fellow citizen, he has a natural right.'[277] The journey which had begun in the imperial crisis, when the dissenters' revitalised notions of "patriotism," was complete: the

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[270] *Ibid*.
[271] Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty*, pp. 115-116.
[272] *Ibid*., p. 130.
[273] 'Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments', c. 20 June 1785, *Founders Online*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0163>, accessed 15 June 2019.
[274] Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty*, p. 131.
[275] *Ibid.*
[276] *Ibid*.
[277] 'Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom', 16 January 1786, *Virginia Historical Society*, <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/thomas-jefferson>, accessed 15 June 2019.

dissenters had launched a counteroffensive against their exclusion. No doubt due to their whiteness, they were among the few politically marginalised groups successful in claiming their rights as "citizens."

These disagreements between elites and marginalised Virginians over who merited the title "citizens" eventually spread to the western counties. Faced with higher taxes from wartime reconstruction, and the Virginia Assembly's perceived inaction toward "tories" and Indians on Virginia's borders, these inhabitants used the Revolution's legacy to protect their status as "citizens." Petitioning the governor Patrick Henry, they argued in December 1785 that 'no right, however sacred, that is possessed by the Citizen' was safe.[278] Their only recourse, they continued, was to 'first [revolutionary] Principles, and to reinstate our Liberties in their pristine vigour'.[279] These "liberties," they noted, extended to property rights over indigenous land. Earlier that year, a group of "freemen" from the Appalachian Mountains argued that their military service had earned them the right to "vacant" lands as the 'first occupants and aboriginers [aborigines] of this Country, freemen claiming natural Rights, and the priviledges of American Citizens.'[280] Whilst Daniel Shays and other disgruntled Continental Army veterans launched an insurrection over debt and taxes in Massachusetts, a similar set of grievances manifested themselves as a full-blown secessionist movement in Washington County, Virginia.[281] Arthur Campbell, the largest landowner in the area, led a failed insurrection opposed to higher taxes and Indian attacks.[282] He appropriated epithets forged throughout the Revolutionary period to make his criticisms. The disgruntled landowner likened the eastern government, arrayed against the 'Whig interest in this County', to the 'political fury, engendered by tory principles'.[283] In a speech used as evidence for his prosecution in court, he also resolved that the 'good Citizen of a free Country' would continue the fight they started against Britain: 'to leave a noble bequest to our sons, a republican or free government.'[284] This 'Democracy or republican government', the 'government of the People', he resolved, was

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[278] Petition to Patrick Henry, December 1785, in Palmer, eds., *Calendar*, vol. 4, p. 76.
[279] *Ibid*.
[280] The Memorial of the Freemen inhabiting the County Westward of the Allegany or Appalachian Mountain, and Southward of the Ouasioto to the Congress of the United States of America, 17 January 1785, in *Ibid*., p. 5.
[281] Scholars have shown that "Shays's Rebellion" was one part of a wider movement in many of the thirteen states, including Virginia. See Robert A. Gross, 'A Yankee Rebellion? Regulators, New England, and the New Nation', *New England Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (March 2009), pp. 112-135; and Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).
[282] Kevin T. Barksdale, *Lost State of Franklin: America's First Secession* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), p. 55 ("largest"); Peter J. Kastor, '"Equitable Rights and Privileges": The Divided Loyalties in Washington County, Virginia, during the Franklin Separatist Crisis', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105, no. 2 (Spring 1997), pp. 193-226 ("insurrection").
[283] Colonel Arthur Campbell to Governor Patrick Henry, 26 July 1785, in Palmer, eds., *Calendar*, vol. 4, p. 44.
[284] Certificate of Andrew Cowan and David Ward, 10 March 1786, in *Ibid*., pp. 100-101.

directly opposed to the monarchies and aristocracies that threatened the 'happiness' and 'equality and virtue' of Campbell's fellow Virginians.[285] "The people," therefore, did not have to wait for the Philadelphia Convention and James Madison to bring that phrase into being.[286] Madison and the actions of his fellow elites had given the "people out of doors" an impetus to cement their status as rightful "citizens" – and their call for rights and belonging echoed within the halls of the Philadelphia State House when negotiations began over a new constitution on 25 May 1787.

Conclusion

This dissertation commenced with Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence and has finished with the Virginian politician again ruminating over epithets. The times had changed, with America and Britain no longer at war, but the partisans' concern over the meaning of epithets in a war over words remained constant. Appealing to their wartime service, both the partisans and their enemies reconstructed epithets, including "refugee," "loyalist," "British American," and "citizen." These identity terms, some of which had been used since the crisis began in 1763, were appropriated for a number of different reasons. For many disaffected persons, the labels "refugee" and "loyalist" encapsulated their feelings of anger at betrayal toward both their partisan enemies and British allies. The partisans used the label "refugee" and "loyalist" for a number of reasons: first, to prove that they were criminals and that the protestors themselves were the real "loyalists"; and, second, in order to create sympathy with the disaffected as persons who Britain had let down in the war. Jefferson and his fellow elite Virginians also redefined "citizen" so that only meritorious white, male persons – not Indian persons, women, or black men – could claim inclusion in the United States. Yet the partisans' efforts to strengthen the exclusionary foundations of "citizen" only provoked an internal war over words, as politically marginalised persons argued that their service in the conflict had earned them inclusion and belonging in the United States. These inhabitants helped to form an ideal of citizenship – a notion that those persons who had fought and suffered in the war were worthy of the title "citizen." And for some Britons, terms like "British American" helped parliamentarians and other British observers see the conflict as a heroic defeat – as a

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[285] *Ibid*., p. 101.

[286] This argument about Madison and his creation of "the people" is made in Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), p. 267. For an argument that invocations of "the people" go back into the seventeenth century, see David Cost, 'Speaking for the People in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 244, no. 1 (August 2019, pp. 51-88.

just war fought well against a worthy enemy. These claims from people intent on winning the peace – whether that meant attaining rights and belonging or reconstructing the terms "subject" and "citizen" on a firmer basis – were made on the basis of merit – on the basis of meritorious service in a destructive and divisive Revolution.

The postwar period was not the end of the war over words either. The white partisans, in their attempt to win the peace, ensured that the conflicts over epithets would continue into the early republic. People continued to clash over just who could be labelled a "citizen." The Virginian gentry's efforts to ensure that women, indigenous peoples, and black persons were excluded from their rights as "citizens" – individuals who had struggled, fought, and died alongside whites – often for their own reasons as much as supporting a cause for independence – provoked a backlash that started in the confederation era and continued over the coming decades. Those inhabitants who the partisans "within doors" had excluded from their rights as "citizens" continued to use their service in the Revolution to claim belonging and inclusion in the United States. Charged by their association with the Revolutionary period, these epithets – and the politics of merit that encouraged such a war over words – were an important presence in politics and the wider public sphere in America. The sense of betrayal that many of these rightful "citizens" felt also made its way into the local assemblies and halls of power in Congress. During the Revolutionary period, the partisans had started to find the words to discuss themselves, build bonds of belonging based on these ideals, and identify their enemies. Now, with the Constitution being enacted in Philadelphia, the war over words took another turn. The partisans, once united against a common enemy in Britain and its disaffected allies, turned these fighting words on each other.

Conclusion

Who belongs in America and why? Historians have pored over this question from many different angles: race, class, gender, and, most recently, disability. These studies have one thing in common, however: they are largely inattentive to epithets, those terms and appellations which denoted a person's qualities or attributes. This is a peculiar omission, both because these terms were so ubiquitous, but also because the partisans' growing usage of these terms reveals a larger shift during the American Revolution over who belonged in the thirteen colonies and then the United States. If the war over these epithets is taken seriously, this thesis has shown that the partisans redefined the meaning of belonging in the Revolution from the imperial crisis through to the Constitutional Convention. They argued that only the most meritorious persons deserved to be called "Americans." The norms, ideals, and practices – the culture – that determined who belonged in America had undergone an important shift. In the transition from thirteen colonies to thirteen independent states, the partisans partly replaced the ideals that had sustained the British Empire, a hierarchical order where birth determined whether subjects were able to attain rights and rewards from their sovereign, with the deceptively-simple notion that one only belonged in America if they deserved the privilege.

Such an argument has a number of implications. This thesis has shown that the partisans created and revitalised many of their terms in the American Revolution. Though most of the labels used during the imperial crisis were present in the Seven Years' War, the evidence in newspapers, diaries, letters, objects, and pamphlets suggests that even a war against France – Britain's nemesis – was not enough to rescue these epithets from obscurity. The Revolution, therefore, was a crucible of language – a period when epithets were transformed. Without the Revolution, would "whig" and "tory" still be antiquated terms as opposed to the powerful labels that they became in the imperial crisis? Would "American" have the same political resonances if it did not emerge at a moment when all of the thirteen colonies, and not just Massachusetts, had their colonial charters threatened? Would "riflemen" have such a powerful hold on the imagination – as a rifle-wielding soldier, fighting in Indian country against native peoples – without the radicalisation of that term after April 1775? Would "republican" still be a hated term in the thirteen mainland colonies, one more synonymous with regicide and religious disorder than liberty, equality, and constitutional order? And would "citizen" remain a term for townsfolk and inhabitants rather than an important label of inclusion for men and women, African-descended persons, whites, and, once they were forced through violence and

land seizures to join the United States, indigenous peoples? The colonial period had given rise to a newfound sense of distinctiveness within the British Empire – a situation where the colonists recognised their distinctive histories whilst also referring to themselves as British subjects – but the Revolution turned that vision into epithets that helped the partisans articulate an "American" sense of self.

The politics of epithets also shows that these terms can offer another pathway that is distinct from focusing on homogeneous ideas of "American identity" and "national identity." The distinction between identification and identity is crucial. Instead of trying to form a homogenised sense of what an "American identity" was or could be in the Revolutionary period, this study has focused on how "the people" understood themselves and others. Epithets were far from mere insults – they were titles of distinction or opprobrium – societal norms and ideals that people either celebrated or despised in their neighbours, enemies, and leaders. Though *identity* has become a method of analysis common throughout the historiography, the notion that we should focus on *identification* – the labels that people used at the time to frame their allegiances – is strangely more novel. However, more work is needed on epithets because this dissertation, whilst it has explored nineteen such terms in detail along with a supporting cast of other labels, is far from exhaustive. If one centres how contemporaries used epithets, there is an opportunity to reorient how we understand the forging of "American" nationalism in the Revolutionary and early national periods. How did these terms spread with a growing public sphere in the early republic? How did their meanings change once they were unmoored from the Revolutionary events and newer generations claimed them?[1] If this thesis has focused on what terms did become popular, then which labels, alongside "British subject," fell to the wayside in the Revolution, and why? And what role did elites play in the process of linguistic change after the Revolution as they sought to reinforce their right to rule? This thesis has been about words, but it is by no means the final word on epithets.

Moving from words and on to the people who used them, the emphasis on elites in this dissertation opens another significant dimension of study: the importance of Jefferson, Washington, Lee, and others in crafting and propagating these epithets. Many historians, as shown in the introduction and chapter two, argue that ordinary people challenged the gentry's right to rule in the Revolution. These elites planned on creating a more conservative republic, Gordon Wood and others argue, but instead found their authority challenged by those who

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[1] Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

wanted to hold their leaders to account. Yet Virginia's gentry class, it appears, were not ready to give up power. The politics of epithets and the partisans' emphasis on merit open up an avenue through which to explain how elites were able to cling on to power. This study has shown that, whilst epithets could offer an avenue for marginalised peoples to claim inclusion, political elites wielded these titles as weapons to maintain their right to rule – as was the case with "rebel" and "insurgent" – and denounce their enemies, whether in Virginia or Britain. Moreover, in shaping the standards by which people aspired to live by, the founding generation may have also ensured that rival or more radical political terms and possibilities could not emerge in America. Labelling and identification as political practices – as a powerful brand of politics that enables people to set societal norms and expectations – needs to be explored in early American history. In acknowledging the power of these labels, early Americanists might also recognise how elites, who were centrally important in reshaping epithets, could use these terms to crush dissenters (like disaffected persons) and reinforce deference. Besides merit, what other forms of prejudice and hierarchy were reborn in the Revolutionary period? And did these ideals, far from lead to the decline of elite rule, actually provide another way for the gentry to cement their authority?

In understanding how epithets were used by those elites "within doors," this study has also shown how the "people out of doors" could make and remake epithets for their own benefit. The gentry made epithets, but they could not make them how they pleased – they shaped and transformed these terms subject to conditions that were not always of their own making, and subject to persons who held elites to account before, during, and – as seen in chapter four – long after the war had concluded. Native peoples continued to use "white person," "Long Knife," and "Virginian" to label their colonist enemies. White women tried to make claims to "citizen" and "American" even though men were intent on closing these terms off on the basis of gender. And America's African-descended inhabitants, particularly those free persons for whom we have more records, demanded to be treated as equals on the basis of merit. Without the rise of these epithets in the Revolutionary period, the struggle for recognition and inclusion in the United States may have taken a different shape. Following the Revolutionary era, a number of marginalised groups argued that they merited inclusion as "citizens," particularly because their ancestors had fought and died in the war. Due to its creation in this period, therefore, these epithets became bound up with attempts by people in the early United States to attain those rights that they were denied in the war's aftermath. Merit has remained important in these struggles for recognition. In recognising themselves as "Americans," the marginalised groups who attempted to write counter-narratives – such as the

black abolitionist William C. Nell's *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* – appealed to a higher ideal that underpinned this discourse: that they were worthy of using these titles as much as the rich white men who had stolen their right to use these epithets following the war's conclusion.[2] These activists ensured that, although the Revolution as a colonial struggle against British rule had concluded, the struggle for rights and belonging continued.

If the struggles for recognition involved epithets, then the battles over who should be excluded in the early United States also involved these terms. Scholars have identified a growing interest in racial science, class, and gendered exclusion after the Revolution, especially on the basis of innate differences between human beings.[3] In doing so, historians have sometimes ignored the more benign, yet significant, ways that seemingly egalitarian ideals, such as merit, were turned into new ways of excluding persons that whites' saw as undesirable inhabitants. The growing use of terms like "un-American," for example, suggested that there were a set of traits and personal features which defined certain persons as not being worthy of calling themselves "Americans." The same story was true with the epithet "aliens," which became prominent with the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 as a way to prosecute all persons who spoke a contrary opinion to the John Adams-led government. Nationality continued to be about one's allegiances as well as birth. As a result, this dissertation's emphasis on merit encourages scholars to not just look at rights in the early republic but also at duties – the obligations that people owed to their community and state. As Samuel Moyn argues, historians of rights discourse often ignore duties.[4] Yet, in the United States, the rights that people valued often depended on the fulfillment of duties. America, in that sense, was little different from the British Empire and subjecthood, which required loyalty in return for rights and protection. Furthermore, if early Americanists examined the full spectrum of ways to exclude people, whether on the basis of birth or merit, then transformational legal victories, such as the emergence of birthright citizenship become even more significant. Not only did

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2 William C. Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons: To which is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans*, intro. by Harriet Beecher Stowe (Boston, 1855). White veterans of the Continental Army were another group that attempted to prosecute their case. See John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); and Catherine Kaplan, 'Theft and Counter-Theft: Joseph Plumb Martin's Revolutionary War', *Early American Literature* 41, no. 3 (2006), pp. 515-534.

3 For race: Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); for gender: Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash*; and for class: Cutterham, *Gentlemen Revolutionaries*.

4 Samuel Moyn has argued that rights were alienable because the nation and state were the crucibles of such provisions. See his *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 20; and 'Rights vs. Duties: Reclaiming Civic Balance', *Boston Review*, (May 2016), <http://bostonreview.net/books-ideas/samuel-moyn-rights-duties>, accessed 5 November 2017.

black persons, who believed that they were born as "citizens," have to fight against the racist belief that they were inferior human beings – they also had to combat the notion that the title "citizens" was only available to those who deserve it, and in the antebellum period that still meant white men.

Whether the "people out of doors" or those "within doors," and whether wielded by those being included or excluded, the politics of epithets often involved verbal abuse and violent language. The literature on violence has shown that coercion was a central theme in early American history, particularly in the Revolutionary period – an era that was a conventional conflict, civil war, enslaved insurrection, imperial struggle, and war over land all in one event. Despite historians' renewed focus on the casualties, destroyed homes, exiles, and ruined landscapes that a destructive conflict wrought, there has been relatively little attention paid to verbal violence in the Revolution – the damage that these terms could cause to their victims when contemporaries used them on the page or in public. Often one reads about epithets in historical works on violence, but historians to not explore them in detail, or they use these words to show that these seemingly colourless terms – "tory," "friend of government," and "patriot" – cannot do justice to the colourful allegiances and choices that people made in the Revolution.[5] Early Americanists' aversion to the lumping of persons into distinct categories is a good one, and this focus has helped scholars complicate their understanding of allegiances beyond strict dichotomies between friends and enemies. Yet these words need to be understood on their own terms. The growing literature on honour and reputation, which Joanne Freeman helped centre in early American history and Craig Bruce Smith has continued to focus on, shows that people at the time were well aware of the potential of words to act as weapons.[6] 'So that in defaming others', read a popular pamphlet excerpted in the *Virginia Gazette* (and mentioned in the George Mercer incident that began the first chapter), 'we commonly rob, sometimes murder, and always injure them; and there are no damages so irreparable, no wounds so incurable, no scars so indelible, as those of a slanderous tongue.'[7] Both the literatures on honour and violence in the Revolution omit epithets – the consequence being that scholars acknowledge the importance of issues such as political gossip, newspaper wars, and duelling, but without understanding the origins, meaning, and power of those epithets. For

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5 Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, p. 8.

6 See Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); and Smith, *American Honor*.

7 'Prophecy', in *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 26 September 1766. For the pamphlet being quoted, see John Scott, *The Christian Life: From its Beginning to its Consummation in Glory*, 5 vols. (London, 1747 [1681]).

people in the late eighteenth century, the loss of reputation through a well-placed epithet was almost as grievous an injury as one inflicted with an actual weapon of war.

The often-acrimonious debates that took place when people used epithets – a rhetorical war over who deserved to use these labels and define their meaning – lastly reveal the difficulty in defining a "shared" or "national" identity for the United States. Historians have long known about the complexity of particular ideas in the Revolutionary era: liberty, independence, sovereignty, freedom, consent, natural rights, and property. But this logic has not always been applied to the epithets that the partisans revitalised and transformed in this era. The war over epithets explored in this dissertation is perhaps why the question "who are Americans?" has been so difficult to answer. Still, early Americanists and political scientists have tried. Samuel Huntington has placed Protestantism at the center of America's sense of self. 'Protestantism', he argued, 'fostered opposition to hierarchy and the assumption that similar democratic forms should be employed in government.'[8] 'The American Creed', he noted, '[…] is Protestantism without God, the secular credo of the "nation with the soul of a church."'[9] Huntington's unproblematic definition of complicated terms, such as "protestant" and "American," may have been anathema to the founding generation, whose Revolution took place in a context where the meaning of words was bitterly contested. The alternative is to think, as David Blight does, of the United States as an 'imperfectly united' country – as a composite nation of many peoples, origins, and ideals. Though not their intention, the white partisans forged epithets that were emblematic of these local distinctions and national divisions.[10] These terms were adaptable as politically marginalised groups and new arrivals into the country claimed what they believed was their rightful status as "Americans"; but the struggle over who merited these terms ensured that their definitions were unstable as white men and political elites continued to redefine these terms to ensure that only whites could be considered as true "patriots," "republicans," and "citizens." For better or worse, the politics of epithets was underpinned by a simple, yet powerful, ideal – one as Janus-faced as the Revolution itself: that people got what they deserved.

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8 Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), p. 68.

9 *Ibid*., p. 69.

10 David W. Blight, 'Composite Nation?', in Joshua A. Claybourn, ed., *Our American Story: The Search for a Shared National Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p. 17.

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Figure 8: 'John Wilkes, the Member for Middlesex, Medal', 1768, *Colonial Williamsburg*, <http://emuseum.history.org/media/view/Objects/101028/206876?t:state:flow=3bed3149-10df-4a9e-9bc2-e329895119c5>, accessed 29 May 2019.

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